

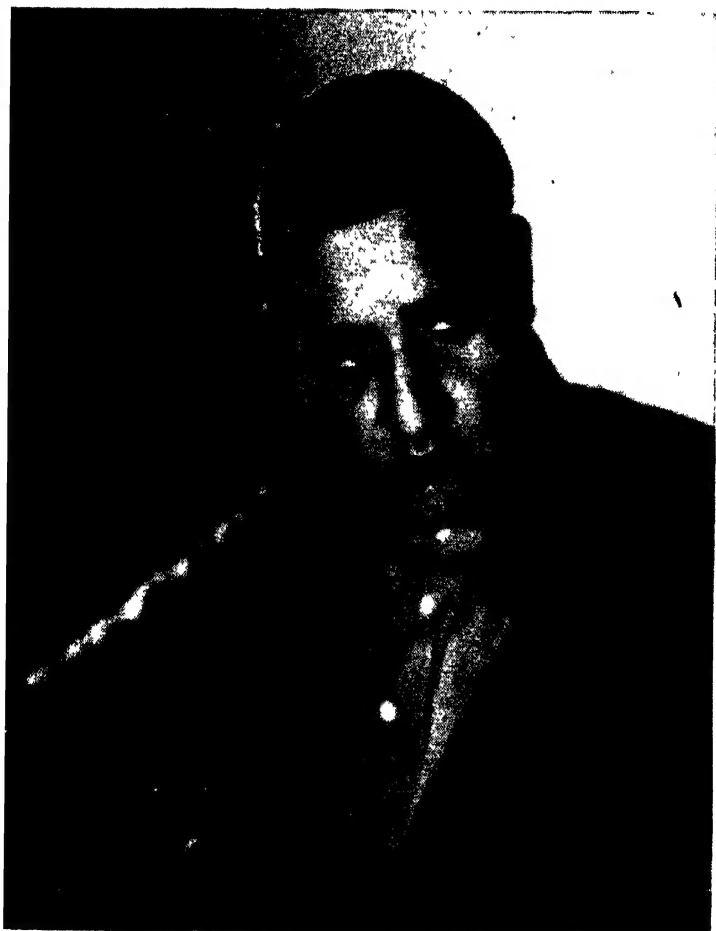


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Mr. SAIGAL

# FILM IN INDIA

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With a Foreword

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## Foreword

Arising from the rough and ready Puppet Show, the relatively refined Film Show has become a sort of mechanized Drama and bids fair to develop into a variety of Fine Art. We want books on Films as many and as good as books on Plays and Theatres.

Mr. Syed Asadullah, B. A., has written an excellent brochure which, I am sure, the film-producers as well as compilers and composers of stories and scenarios for Film-land, will welcome as their friend philosopher and guide—"friend", because the author knowing their limitations and difficulties treats them with sympathy and consideration—"philosopher", because he sets before them a workable ideal or theory of film-technique and film-production,—and "guide", because his criticisms are less destructive than constructive—such as, for example, that the character of a filmplayer should be revealed not so much by words he speaks as by acts he shows.

I do not think that anybody could find fault with Mr. Asadullah's theory or the

ideal, which he sets up before all interested in the progress and welfare of the film-industry. It is: that a Cinema-Talkie should endeavour to exhibit "Life in Action" rather than "Life at Rest", with no other object than what would give pure pleasure to the masses of people—and this, without taxing too much their attention or understanding. To define the ideal by its negatives, the author says that no film should be difficult to understand without giving it such close attention as the Theatre-goers must give to understand the plot, characters and the action of the play. The supreme objective of all artistic productions being pleasure and pleasure only for all who see and hear, no film should mar the pleasure by the pain or discomfort incidental to close attention required to comprehend anything adequately. Nor should any film exhibit anything that goes counter to or jars upon the ordinary feelings and susceptibilities of ordinary people or the ordinary understanding of those who constitute not less than 95 per cent of the Talkie audience. Again, no film should fail to be interesting alike to men, women and children, who are in the auditorium, whether or not their tastes

be refined or otherwise. It is to secure attention and enthrall feelings that the author would totally ban the shows of Life at Rest as contrasted with the ever emerging and ever moving life which he calls Life in Action. What he really means by the phrase must be gathered by the readers from his study of certain well-known films which he has selected for illustration and criticism according to his theory or ideal. A glance at the Index of this little book will give the reader a general idea of the sweep of his survey from Demosthenes and Fried to Saigal and Uma Devi!

I shall not be surprised if this book, written for specialists or experts of Film land, is found interesting to the general reader also. The examination of successful and other films shows the trend of the moving moral ideas of the Indian Nationhood in these days of automobiles and aeroplanes, telephones and radios that have abridged time and space for even villagers in out-of-the-way corners of India.

**Ahmed Hussain**

**(Amin Jung)**





## PREFACE

The purpose of this little book is to serve the cinema industry by offering a few suggestions to the Indian producer for its improvement. New as the industry is, it is undeniably great and pulsates with energy and vigour. It needs, more than anything else, constructive criticism and useful suggestions. The balance sheet is not the safest guide. The Indian producer thinks in terms of thousands while his rival, the American producer thinks in terms of millions. The former has, of course, a limited field, but there still remains a vast tract which he has not been able to traverse as yet. A large section of the educated people has not yet come under his fold. He is satisfied with a fraction of the illiterate. Himself anxious to improve the quality of his production, he suppresses frank and bold criticism mostly indirectly, for, he thinks, it affects his immediate gain. Frank criticism is generally regarded by him as one-sided and prejudiced. In an attempt to cloak his own incapacity to produce quality films, he lays the blame on

factors which, in no way, contribute to his failure.

His neglect of his duty to the industry does not necessarily mean that he has effected no improvement during the last decade. In fact he has made recognizable progress in many directions. There are better technicians and better artists to-day in India than they were ten years ago. Some of the companies such as the New Theatres, the Prabhat, the Bombay Talkies, the Sagar and the Ranjit have given us a few really good pictures. But the quantity of the quality pictures in India is miserably small. The lack of good scenarios and adequate direction is mainly responsible for this. Stories are invited from people who are reputed for their literary style and diction. Literary style and diction have no place in film story. The story which describes action is what is really required. Of this these reputed scholars are generally unaware. To these wrong persons the producer enthusiastically approaches. In an attempt to exploit their name he is himself exploited. His picture consequently lacks in concentrated and dynamic action, significant details, tense situations and consistent cha-

racters. The story which appears attractive on account of its high-sounding words, polished style, pithy dialogue and the sentiments of the Morality Plays, ultimately proves disastrous to him especially when his director does not know how to mend it.

The content of the first chapter of this book stands opposed to what is generally held by the producer about the artistic films. Clash of opinions often gives rise to excitement and the consequent thoughtless remarks. May we therefore request our readers to calmly reflect on what we have stated in this chapter before they pass any remarks. The second chapter deals with some of the instinctive cravings to which every film should appeal in order to be successful. The third and the fourth chapters attempt to examine a few of the successful pictures of only the New Theatres and the Prabhat. At some places we are a little bit frank in our criticism and we therefore offer our apologies beforehand to those whose feelings we are likely to injure. The spirit underlying our criticism obviously aims at serving the interest of the producer and the public. The fifth and the sixth chapters deal with the forms of the

tragic and the comic stories for films. Attempts have been made to explain on psychological grounds why tragedies fascinate the audience and what kind of comic situations are capable of exciting an uproar of laughter.

We are thankful to those ladies and gentlemen who, on our request, have so kindly sent us their blocks. Our thanks are due also to Mr. Syed Sadullah Qadri who placed at our disposal his records of Indian films which he keeps both regularly and systematically.

## CHAPTER 1.

# **Artistic films are intended for and intelligible to the masses.**

The film is the most democratic of the arts. It stands or falls by the favour or disfavour of the masses. When it obviously depends on the patronage of the average citizen, the working man, the labourer and the peasant, it is unthinkable that it will maintain its existence if it works on lines antagonistic to their interests.

Those reputed directors who have evolved the principles of film art seem to have never ignored the mental receptive power of the masses, as is evident from the principles themselves which definitely aim at making the dramatic content of the narrative intelligible and interesting to the average spectator. For what, after all, are the principles of film art except that whatever invariably pleases the majority of the audience is formulated in the form of maxims. The works of art always precede the principles of art, which are, in fact, the reactions of the public itself. The film is essentially the art of the

masses and the principles governing this art should necessarily serve their interest.

The argument that the masses cannot understand and appreciate artistic films is a glaring denial of the art itself. When what the film art produces for the masses is not intelligible to them it is certainly no art, for the film art is fundamentally bound with them. Art or no art. Whatever pleases the majority of the audience is real art. The majority crave for stirring stories, first and foremost. The duty of the director lies, therefore, in his selection of material from human life, and in the methods he employs in presenting that material, so that the audience should emotionally react to what is presented to them. They are not interested in his technical methods, his editing, cutting, montage, the light intensities, construction of the plot, sequences and situations and the selection of incidents and of themes. He is free to employ any methods he chooses, simple or intricate. Nobody questions him. But when he fails in producing the desired effect, the audience have the right to revolt against him.

The fact that they possess limited mental receptive power should govern his work at

every stage. They are not, of course, unimaginative animals. They have average intelligence and average experience of men and things enough to understand and appreciate a story well told. Since most of the cinemas are situated in cities and towns, the cinema audience belong to the urban population, which undoubtedly possesses higher intellect and wider experience than the villagers.

No art thrives without appreciation. The most vital and human arts have been produced in those periods when the love of arts has been widespread throughout a great community. How can, then, the film, which is fundamentally the art of the masses, thrive when it ceases to appeal to them.

The film art is the product of the demand or of the needs of the multitude. Its problem is of the human body and the concrete world around, not of abstract and intricate objects. Life in action is its theme. The brute incident is its vital interest. To present action in visual images is its primary aim. Its appeal is direct to the eye. It does not arrest the rapid march of events for the sake of reflection and elaborate analysis



of human character unless character forms its central theme. It presents action in harmony with the surrounding. As far as possible it avoids literary methods to depict human life, so that the masses may not require the knowledge and the brains of the educated to understand 'life in action'.

Life's passions, joys and sorrows are common to both the educated and the illiterate. Instinctive tendencies are pulsating in every human being alike. Life's vital needs are common to both. The literates are as much moved as the illiterate whenever a danger threatens their vital interests, such as life, honour, family, property and religion. Escape from dangers relieves them. Gratification of instinctive desires exhilarates them. Each strives to assert his own importance on his surroundings. Tyranny and oppression are resentful to every one. Self-expression is the vital need of each. The tendency for variety and change excites all to fresh conquests of objects and to new experiences. To them novelty soon wears itself out and that yesterday's marvel becomes commonplace of today. Sex has got as much interest for one section as it has for the other. Each is equally interested in the study of

human traits and motives as well as in the adjustment of social relations.

When the vital interests of life are common to the masses and the educated people, it is unthinkable why a film that can please the former should not please the latter especially when it is artistically constructed. Artistic construction of a film necessarily aims at clarity, vividness and effect. If the vital interests of human life are presented with vigour and clarity, there is no reason why it should not please both the sections.

The cry of the educated for artistic films is really the cry for a rational and effective presentation of vital aspects of human life. This is exactly the demand of the masses themselves with one solitary modification that what is presented should be intelligible to them. Let us presently examine the principles of film art how their very aim is to fulfil scrupulously the same demand.

The theme, according to the maxims of film art, should be simple, should represent some vital truth of human life, and should serve as the central idea of the narrative. These three aspects of the theme are obviously intended to aim at clarity and the

instnsification of interest. The limited mental receptivity of the masses is also not ignored.

Metaphorically expressed the theme represents the soul and the story, the body. If the soul is beautiful while the body is ugly, the film naturally lacks in harmony. It is not enough that the central idea of the story should represent a great truth of human life; it should be illustrated, at the same time, with powerfully expressive incidents and stirring situations.

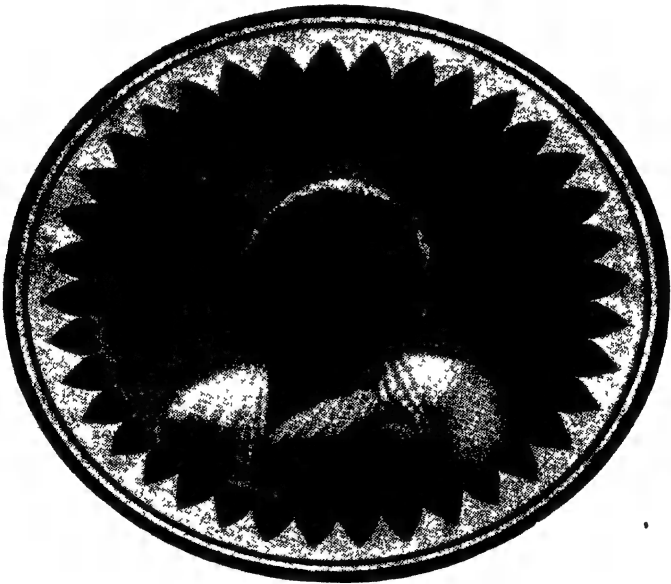
Study "Dav Das", "the Manzil", "Anath Ashram", "Vidyapati", "Amrath Manthan" and "Beyond the Horizon"—all of them possess beautiful souls but miserably lack in beautiful bodies. None of them has got a great soul except "Vidyapati". There is a difference between the greatness of one truth of human life and that of the other. One concerns the most vital interests of our life while the other concerns our passing interests. One stirs us more powerfully than the other. The effect of one on our life is extensive and permanent while that of the other is transitory and narrow.

Study again the "President", "Maya" and "Dharmatma". Their stories are quite adequate to their themes. They are, therefore, more interesting and less confusing. We have the desired harmony between their souls and their bodies. Their stories develop naturally and inevitably. Most of the incidents are significant and expressive. Their themes are both simple and interesting. The pictures, as a whole, are, therefore, intelligible to men of average intelligence and average experience.

The construction of the plot of a film-story reveals the same motive of rendering the dramatic content intelligible and interesting to the masses. The story is so outlined that it forms into a beginning, a middle and an end. The march of events in the beginnings is low and explanatory. More of dialogue is placed in the middle. In the end, especially from the climax, there is a rapid march of events. The meaning of such an arrangement of events is obvious. It is intended to enable the audience to follow the story without strain. The validity of the arrangement will be revealed if we just reverse its process. There will then be nothing but confusion and chaos.

To intensify action and to make the dramatic content of the narrative more intelligible and more effective, devices such as suspense, surprise, contrast, parallelism, symbolism, simultaneity, leit-motif, etc., are also employed. Events are not narrated as they occur in actual life. They are so arranged that they convey a clearer meaning with greater force and depth. Conflicts of various kinds are introduced. Sentiments are touched and instinctive cravings are aroused and gratified. Anything that involves reflection on the part of the audience is eliminated. Whatever gives rise to confusion is checked.

Among these devices it is the symbolic presentation of ideas that presents a real difficulty to the illiterate especially when symbols are loosely constructed. However intelligent, he may be, he cannot generally grasp the meaning of symbols, for symbols mostly express the abstract in the form of the concrete, and are, on many occasions inadequate. Although symbolism, like other devices, aims at making the dramatic content of the narrative more intelligible and more interesting, it very often fails in its aim. Some of the authorities on film technique, however, do not regard symbolism as an



Miss LEELA DESAI



art medium, and we may, therefore, ignore it altogether. Let those educated people who are in the habit of indulging in the study of intricate problems whenever they do not find real art, be left to their fate.

The selection of details, likewise, aims at clarity, vividness and effect. Concentrated or intensified action, which is secured by eliminating all the inessential details, grips the interest of the audience. Weakly represented details generally give rise to gaps in the picture. Incidents selected for their power and expressiveness, and situations prepared for exciting instinctive cravings, arrest the attention of the spectators. Incidents not governed by the law of causation create disgust. For a mother to sing before the corpse of her own child is as unnatural as for a woman to fight successfully against an armed force. Novelty of incidents from everyday life is thrilling and delightful. Repetition of incidents, however expressive, from successful films, lose their vitality and vigour. There are hundreds of precedents for the method of presenting a suicide such as by shooting with a revolver, by lying on the railway lines, by taking poison, by hanging with a rope and by throwing from a bridge.



Repetition of the same method deprives the incident of its attraction. Essential details are capable of turning even a hackneyed subject into an interesting story, for 'art is a matter of detail'.

Sometimes the film presents human traits as its central theme. Character is created in a variety of ways, by description, suggestion, dialogue and action. The film develops character only by means of action, because when the dramatic personages act, they are more easily understood by the average spectator. Actions speak louder than words. The novel portrays its characters by means of description, and the drama by means of dialogue. The film does not adopt either of these methods. It makes the audience understand its dramatic personages by what they do. It is most economic in its methods of portraying character. It avoids a long sequence if a single striking incident is enough to describe a particular trait adequately.

In order to avoid confusion the film limits the number of its major characters to one, two or three. The minor characters are strictly kept subordinated to the major characters. Lime-light is thrown on the leading

characters. All the lines of behaviour of the various characters are clearly expressed. Their definite relations with one another are clearly stated. The major events in which they take part are adequately described.

Human character is so complex that it requires a highly developed intellect to penetrate into its intricate aspects. But, in order to enable the masses, whose mental receptivity is limited, to understand and appreciate human character, the film stamps and selects one characteristic trait, good or bad, and stresses it throughout. The trait stands as an expression of this particular quality. Special care is taken to reveal character gradually so that the impression of unnaturalness may be avoided and clarity maintained.

The film is fundamentally interested in the brute incident. Very rarely it presents character as its central theme, and when it does so, the plot naturally becomes slender, for the plot and character are so related that they vary with each other. It should not necessarily mean that when the film stresses upon the brute incident, attention need not be paid to characterisation. Negligence of

this kind on the part of the Indian directors has given rise to inconsistent and incomplete characters in most of the well-known pictures.

There must be sufficient plausibility and reality about the characters to justify their existence. Even the illiterate audience get disgusted at the sight of unnatural characters or their unnatural behaviour. Physical appearance should suite the part an artist is required to play. What appearance suits a tragedian cannot suit a comedian. Similarly what behaviour becomes a king cannot become a servant. Stature is a factor in suitability. So is voice. If a tragedian is deficient in emotional power, he cannot impress the audience as such. If he is short deformed and crippled, and if he lacks in a voice that is deep and in the eye that is piercing, his acting will fall flat on the audience. In short suitability of part considerably adds to the exposition of the meaning of the dramatic content.

In a film of art harmony is established between the environment and the dramatic content. Obviously the aim of such a harmony

is clarity, vividness and effect. The emotional states of the dramatic personages are reflected in their surroundings. 'If there is a storm in the human heart there is a storm in the frenzy nature too.' If a character is in a happy mood, the environment in which he is placed, is in harmony with his mood, so that his mood should be transmitted to the audience with greater intensity.

The entire visible world forms the setting of the film but in a film of art no setting is used in isolation with the dramatic content of the narrative. When a background, in which the action of the story should be immersed, is used merely for decoration, it diverts the attention of the audience from the dramatic content.

The aim of acting is, likewise, to interpret and convey the meaning of the dramatic content to the audience. This the actor does by means of his gestures, deportment, facial expression, voice, personality, dialogue and action. In a film of real art greater attention is paid to expressing human feelings and intentions by what the actor does than to miming. The mental states are also expressed by means of inanimate objects. A heap of dead cigarette ends is used to indi-

cate nervousness and the elapse of time. Suppressed emotion is preferred to the outburst of that emotion. The nervous drumming of fingers is more effective than the shaking of the entire body. Devices such as these are adopted by the film art in order to avoid the staleness which generally characterises the conventionalised miming.

The miming of the human face and the gestures of the body and limbs are some of the effective means of expressing human thought and feeling. In actual life gestures especially of modern people are not generally vivid and significant, because to give vent to emotions is regarded as a sign of rusticity and a drawback in concealing the real motives. The case is just the reverse in the cinema and on the stage. The actor cannot make himself understood unless his gestures are both vivid and significant.

The art-value of acting is to be considered in relation to voice, gestures and deportment, because these are the important symbols of expression. The training and the management of voice is a matter of much artistic study. What voice can suite the tragic actor cannot suite the comic actor. The same case is true with regard to the male and the female

artists. Besides, the voice should vary in accordance to changes in moods. The voice that suits a jubilant mood spoils the artistic value of acting if it is used for a sorrowful mood. Voice is of various qualities, viz., harsh, strident, flexible, melodious, resonant, deep, vibrating, piercing, soft, limpid, caressing, quivering, powerful, rotund, enchanting, gentle, attractive, nervously vibrant, etc., and each of these qualities has its own proper place. The voice that exactly suits the occasion and the part to be played by the actor, considerably helps the interpretation of the meaning of the dramatic content.

The art of speaking distinctly in tones suitable to moods, occasions and personalities raises the level of acting. The manner in which the distinguished characters such as kings and royalties, talk, differs from that of ordinary people. The tone that indicates contempt and scorn cannot suite the expression of love. The way that a villain speaks, should be significant of his villainous intentions. Proper pauses have their own eloquence.

It is said that a great performer plays with his face, while a vulgar actor plays with

his voice and gesture, because the facial expression conveys his meaning to the audience more swiftly than what his voice and gesture can. Facial expressions resembles 'thought before speech' in its swiftness. Of the three important symbols of expression in the face viz., the eye, the mouth and the brows, the eye is most expressive of both delicate and sterner emotions. The eyes of the dying man, the disappointed lover, the inspired, the seer, the injured, the enraged, the brave, the coward, the criminal, the murderer, the villain, the guilty, the terrified, the slave, the master, and of the man who is labouring under conflicting emotions, are more striking than any speech or gesture. The eyes that record the rapid transitions of emotions, the eyes that are blazed with passion, the eyes that pierce into the heart, are more comprehensive in their meaning than the finest dialogue.

Gesture is concomitant with facial play as a symbol of expression. It should be a spontaneous outcome of feeling. A significant and clear cut gesture is more expressive than the spoken word. The tendency to excessive gesture should be restricted, because whenever a gesture is used rarely, it becomes







Miss MADHURI

effective. Gesture should always precede the spoken word unless the occasion demands it otherwise. Grace in gesture is an ideal to be sought by every artist. Grace of style, which is a matter of each individual artist, differentiates itself from the standardised gestures. It is the outcome of a creative mind. A significant nod or a significant movement of the hand can make the hidden feelings and the motives of the actor intelligible to the audience.

As in gestures there is the quality of grace in deportment. Jerky movements are resentful. Stepping, walking, lying, sitting, leaning—all these physical movements please the eye and are considerably helpful in the interpretation of the dramatic content if they are performed with grace, elegance and significance. Gestures and deportment of a dignified personality cannot be similar to those of the village rustic. So also what gestures and movements are necessary for the expression of a particular mood, cannot be suitable for a diametrically different mood. Again, different actors may adopt different kinds of gestures and movements to express the same mood but the most significant of them alone receive the applause of the audience.

Recall the acting of Prithiviraj and note how most of his movements are jerky. His gestures are standardised and stale. Nor are they significant and expressive. The meaning that he intends to convey to the audience is not generally adequately revealed through his gestures and deportment. There is more of the stage in him than of the film. At times he appears to be a mere lump of flesh moving meaninglessly hither and thither.

The economic use of facial expression, voice and gesture is an art. The comedians, especially in the Indian pictures, strive to be funny all the time. In the early scenes they pour out all their comic tricks and become uninteresting in the latter part of the picture. Inaction in its proper place is the fundamental principle of film art. This the Indian artists generally forget. Where they have to stand or sit silent they will be grimacing or meaninglessly moving their limbs.

It is art to conceal art. To copy nature as it is, is not art; to idealise nature and yet to appear natural is real art. In actual life expression of emotions by means of gestures is neither uniform nor significant, and it

should not, therefore, be actually copied. Hence the necessity for the selection of expressive gestures and deportment, for the primary aim of art is to make the meaning of the dramatic content clear to the audience.

Gestures as symbols of expression transmit emotions to the audience who feel them as the artist feels. Art lies in the way an emotion is transmitted. One artist bursts out into or pours out his passion all at once while the other, by suppressing it, indicates the power of its strength through its reactions such as the quevering mouth, the shaking hand, the nervous fingers and the utterance of improper words.

There is a difference between art and art. What one artist in a fine style manipulates or flicks the ash off his cigarette, takes off his hat, lies down on a sofa, puts on his cloaks or his spectacles, handles his tea-cup, crosses his legs, enters the car, steps into the room, the other does not do with the same nicety. The manner of one is distinct, essentially individualistic and highly desirable while that of the other is standardised and stale.

In a good work of art everything must be clear. Miming in film acting must be absolutely plain and unmistakable. The artist's face must be so constituted that the required expression emerges quite clearly down to the smallest details. He must reduce the play of his face and limbs to the last possible degree of unambiguousness. He must so polish his role that nothing vague should remain.

The artist must possess both the executive and the conceptional powers. Unless he fathoms the depths of character, traces its latent motives, feels its finest quiverings of emotion, comprehends the thoughts that are written under words, he cannot represent it in its true conception. The executive powers of the artist, therefore, are dependent on his conceptional powers. There should be harmony between emotion and intellect although emotion is more often advantageously allowed to predominate.

It may be evident, by this time, that the film art is primarily intended to appeal to the masses, for at no stage does it ignore the limitation of their mental receptivity, and nowhere does it fail to strive for clarity,

vividness and effect. If directors are incompetent in the application of its principles to their work, it is no fault of the art itself. It has been customary with such directors to make the ignorance of the masses serve as a shelter to their incompetency.

Artistic films, in no case, demand high literacy and profound wisdom on the part of the audience. It is the average intelligence and average experience of men and things that are really required to appreciate films of art. The urban population mainly contributes to the cinema audience in India. It has been mentally growing for the last one decade. The directors themselves are more experienced to-day in their line than what they were some years ago. They are, therefore, more advantageously placed at the present time to apply themselves seriously to the construction of artistic films. If they really feel it difficult to appeal to the masses and the educated class at one and the same time, let them appeal exclusively to the latter section. They will, in that case, make ten times the money they are getting today. In spite of a widespread illiteracy in India, there exists a large number of educated people in cities and towns who are inclined to patronize artistic

films provided they get them. This educated section alone is enough to make the present income of the producer tenfold.

It will surprise our readers if we state that the number of the illiterates among the cinema audience in India does not exceed ten percent. Such a low percentage of the illiterates, who are generally confined to the last two classes, is invariably found whenever cinema halls are full. If, after verification, our statement is found correct, it clearly indicates that the real masses, to whom the film must appeal, lie between the highly educated and those who know simple reading and writing.

## **CHAPTER II.**

# **Why some films appeal with power and intensity?**

The basis of our likes and dislikes, pleasures and pains, are the instincts. Anything that stirs up our emotions, be that a joke, a song, a situation, an incident, a scene, a sequence, a story, a theme, an environment, an action, a beautiful face or a popular star involves some instinct or the other. Our desires and cravings, our ideals and sentiments, our pleasures and pains, our virtues and vices, our struggles and conflicts, our tastes and standards, our friendship and enmity, our love and hate, our fears and anxieties, and even our passing thoughts take their origin from the instincts. All the glamour that surrounds our so-called high ideals of taste is reducible to this instinctive origin. Instincts are common to every individual irrespective of literacy, intellect and experience. Hence they form the best and the most powerful common factors of appeal.

Let us, for instance, take up the instinct of self-assertion. There is not a single



individual in the whole of the world who does not feel in himself or herself a tendency to assert his or her importance on those with whom he or she lives. The means through which this tendency works are many and varied, viz. physical strength, beauty, voice, wealth, power, pomp and splendour, knowledge, caste, ancestral traditions, intellectual equipment, professional efficiency, virtues; character, influence, social status religion etc. These are not only the means of getting recognition, but they are also most desirable ideals, which have the power to draw our attention and excite our admiration. The ancient, the mediæval, as well as the modern dramatists and the novelists upto the first half of the nineteenth century invariably built up their themes round the people of high rank, wealth and social position. Even today the chief characters are taken from the rich and the high in ninety-nine per cent of our films. The reason for such a selection is obvious. Man worships these ideals both in himself as well as in others. The root cause of hero-worship lies here.

Man lives by praise and dispraise of the society in which he lives. The basis of most



Mr. SHORAB MODI



of his virtues is the fear of the society, not of God, for otherwise, there would never be such a vast gulf between his private and public life. If today the fear of society is removed, most of his virtues will disappear inspite of his religion and old habits.

Most of the instinctive desires are asocial, that is, they work against the dictates of the society. It is our persistent desire to get hold of every attractive and useful object belonging to others, such as a women, property and power. The same desire pulsates in every individual equally powerfully. Many of our daily fueds are inspired by the same desire. The society strives to establish a harmony between the conflicting desires of individuals by means of moral code, for otherwise, the entire humanity will perish. It is due to the fear of society that we try to keep ourselves within our bounds, with the result that most of our vital desires remain ungratified throughout our life. These ungratified desires influence our attitude towards men and things.

When an instinctive desire, such as love power, wealth, strength, beauty, honour etc. of a person remains ungratified, it withdraws

itself into the unconscious, from where it acts and reacts as a subconscious factor. In the cinema hall his subconscious factors react when he watches the film. Although he knows that the life he is witnessing is but shadows, he feels the ebb and flow of his emotions at every point of interest. He associated himself with the hero's pleasures and pains, successes and failures, pomp and splendour, cares and comforts as if these are his own. In the person of the hero he fights the battles of democracy and freedom, transfers the wealth of the rich to the poor, gets the girls he loves inspite of the barriers of caste, creed and social status. But when he comes out of the cinema-hall he finds the world quite different: wealth, power comforts and love are as unachievable to him as they were before. In a good story well-told he realizes, though for a few hours, those ungratified desires which he failed to get fulfilled in actual life. He feels relieved when the hero comes out safe and successful after experiencing a series of dangers and suspenses. If daughters assert their personal rights in matters of love and elope with their lovers he enjoys their freedom but when, in actual life, his own daughters behave simi-

larly his assertive instinct, in the shape of family honour, revolts against them.

Of the two equally beautiful girls, who is more attractive, the one that is rich or the one that is poor? If the same beautiful rich girl happens to possess additional qualities such as social status, chastity, sincerity, faithfulness, willing obedience or the spirit of service, why our attraction is heightened and our love for her intensified? It is just because she possesses all the means which can gratify our instinct of assertion, giving us an exclusive possession over her with all her merits placed at our service. These means of gratification are declared to be virtues of very high value which, with a touch of divinity, the society insists on maintaining at very high penalties, viz. death, destruction, dishonour and economic social boycott to the transgressors. Curiously enough the society is more strict with women than with men for the maintenance of these virtues. Why it is so, is obvious. We shall describe a little later the attitude of the Indian producers towards women, their morals, their love affairs, and their conception of love and social relations. Let us presently go on with the manifestations of the

instinct of assertion, for this will enable us to understand more accurately the various aspects of life presented in the Indian films.

Man is interested more in the life of the rich, the powerful and the high. He pays much regard to the wealthy although he may be a fool and is indifferent to the learned if he happens to be poor. He does so because he hates poverty which deprives him of the means of assertion. The struggle for equality, democracy and socialism are the outcome of the same tendency. When one cannot go up to the level of the highly placed people one tries to drag them down to one's own level. Professional jealousy and in some cases rivalry and competition are the manifestations of the same instinct, as are most of our quarrels, rights, gossipe, blass-famies, intrigues, jokes and wits.

The aim of woman's coquetry is to gain power over her admirer. In matters of love the instinct of assertion is as active as the sex-instinct. The desire for the exclusive possession over the beloved and the demand for faithfulness and chastity from her are inspired mainly by the former. In fact love grows up on the gratification of the instinct

of assertion. Disappointment in love is felt more keenly and destroys the gist of life because two powerful instincts are involved therein. But it is often experienced that insult, which directly hits the assertive instinct, is capable of calling forth greater amount of our energy to resist than does the failure in matters of pure sex.

The assertive tendency in the form of self-expression is the highest source of happiness. If the merits of the poet, the dramatist, the novelist, the artist, the film-producer, the engineer, the artisan, the research worker, and the patriot are not recognised by the society in which they live, their life becomes dull and unhappy. The fact that Carlyle's manuscript of the French Revolution and Newton's notes were destroyed accidentally was one of the most painful events of their lives, indicates how dear people hold the means of their self-expression.

When the assertive instinct is not gratified, it generally gives rise to inferiority-complex. Man holds in highest esteem especially physical beauty and honour. When he does not possess them he either feels himself inferior and remains as such throughout



his life, or he courageously seeks their compensation in other fields of human activities. Napoleon was short in stature, and was consequently sensitive, resentful, broody, always shirking society in his youth. He, however, sought his compensation in the field of politics and became the master of Europe. Tolstoy was ugly and used to complain very often that he was prepared to give up all that he had if he would only get his face transformed. And he became the first rate novelist. Yugonoscolo of Italy (1778-1827) was likewise ugly but he was bold enough to laugh out his own ugliness before his friends. He became great in the field of poetry. Demosthenese used to smutter but he fought against his weakness and became the greatest orator of the world.

Like the physical deformity, illegitimacy serves in some cases, as an incentive to greatness and fame. The cases of Papen the Bull, Murray the Good, Erasmus, Leonordo De Vinci, Jane Le Ran Rambert, the poets Pross and Savage, etc. are obvious examples from history.

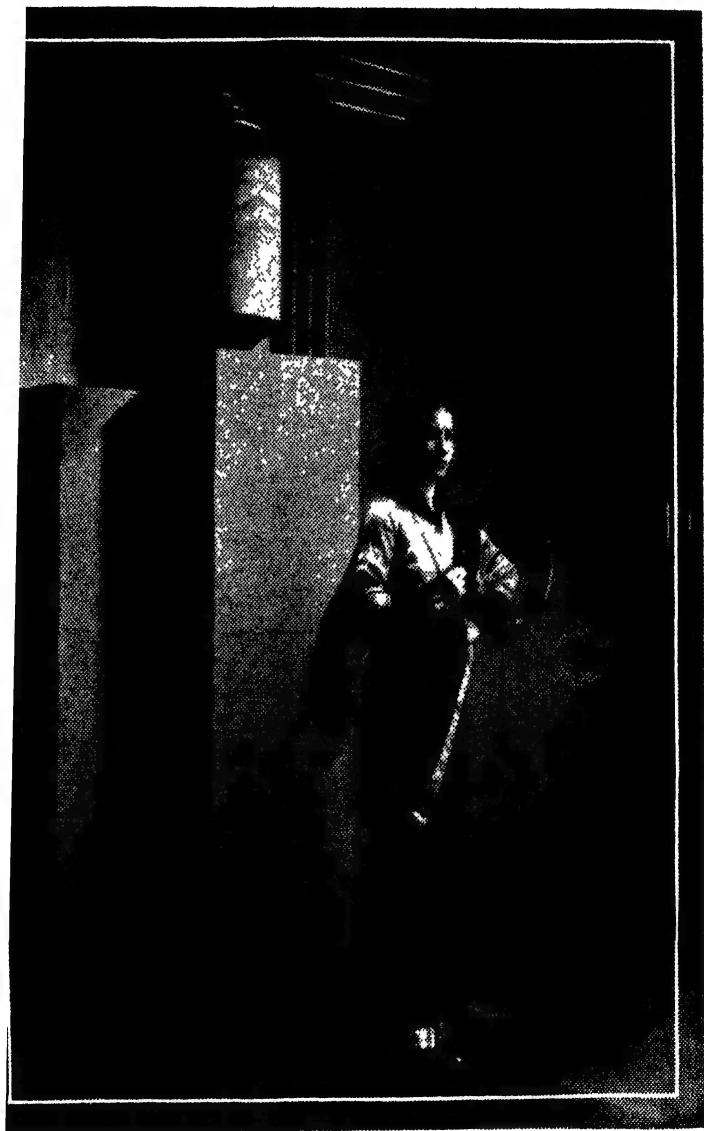
The tendency for variety and change is also the outcome of the same assertive ins-

tinct. It is the root of civilisation and human progress. Human life is a series of successive stages of securing knowledge and possession of all that is in the universe and turning everything therein to advantage. Every new object attracts him and gives rise to curiosity and sensation. Once he gets familiarized with it, it loses its attraction for him. He thus marches on forward in quest of new objects and new sensations, serving, on the one hand, his own instinctive craving and on the other, adding his experience to civilization and progress.

“Old order changeth yielding place to new”. The same law works imperceptibly in all the fields of human activities including aesthetics or taste. There is less uniformity in the standards of taste and it is ever moving. What was attractive yesterday is quite stale today. There is a considerable difference between our way of looking at things and that of the ancients or the people of the middle ages. In most cases the feeling of each individual establishes its own standards of taste and in some cases insignificant minority arrives at certain uniformity, which for this very reason cannot be imposed upon

the overwhelming majority. The safest guide in matter of taste, therefore, is to discover ways and means of effectively appealing to the instincts without transgressing the sense of decorum. As the tendency for variety and change is very active, the instinctive cravings cannot be gratified unless those ways and means of appeal are afresh every time. Success in arts more especially in the film art depends upon this. If you study the films that have failed, you will surely discover that the themes, the plots, the incidents, the sequences the devices employed in the development of action, the environment, the shots, the poses, the comic, the songs, etc. have grown stale although they might have been very effective when they were first employed by the director who invented them. Most of the methods of presenting pictorially the story in the Indian films, are mere adaptations from the American films, and these too have been so much overused in India that they have grown disgustingly stale. Lovers wandering and running after one another in gardens, girls singing with flowers in their hands or amidst groves of flower plants, on the bank of the river or by the side of a fountain, ceaseless chasing or





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horses or in cars, groups of decoits or rebels engaged in khawali in their resorts when serious work is at hand, duels and fights with swords, the tyrant prime minister or the commander-in-chief, the husband as drunk-and and debauchee, the younger prince as a calculating villain, love for a low caste girl and the consequent conflict between the two groups of the lower and the higher castes, marriages against the will of the lovers conflict between the growing freedom of the younger generation and their adamant parents, abject obedience of the wife to the arrogant husband, the disappointed lover either turning into a drunkard or a recluse or committing suicide—things such as these have lost their original charm because of their repetition even without a new twisting. Selection of stimulating themes, expressive incidents, logical development of the plot, dynamic intensity in action, presentation of abstract ideas, feelings and moods in concrete forms are less frequently found in the Indian films.

Be that as it may. So long an art keeps pace with the tendency for variety and change, its appeal is direct, effective and

emotional. Once it becomes conventionalised due to a lack of creative imagination in the director, intellectual elements and complex factors creep in. Then it is confined to a few intellectuals who monopolise it in order that it should serve as a means for their superiority over the masses. As a mathematician feels exultant after solving a difficult problem, so they feel happy and proud whenever they happen to discover some profound meaning in any of the aspects of their art, although that aspect may not be able to convey the same meaning to other unconcerned intellectuals or the creator of the art himself might not have intended to convey the same meaning, which they have discovered.

Another group of human cravings to which the director can effectively appeal, take their source from the instinct of self-preservation. In this world of conflicting interests where one creature forms the food of another, and where dangers to life, both controllable and uncontrollable, known and unknown, exist, the self-preservation instinct serves one of the most vital interests of both man and animal. In the olden days man had to live amidst wild forests, beasts, injurious creatures,

mountains and valleys, and in order to protect himself as well as his family he had to encounter these dangers. Centuries of struggle has left a deep impression of these dangerous objects on him, and even today, when the modern civilization has provided him with adequate protection against them, their very sight gives rise to the same old emotions of olden days, viz. fear, courage, revenge, ruthlessness, etc.

When man has to face a danger, say a beast, either he should, out of fear, run away from him or he should, with courage, fight against him. Once he is in the fight, he inevitably becomes ruthless. Man is not only the most ruthless animal but he is also revengeful, in spite of religious dictates and civilization. The modern warfare is the glaring example of the existence of his primitive tendency. The only difference between the primitive and the modern man is that the latter tries to discover a moral cause to gratify his tendency for cruelty and ruthlessness while the former used to get excited mostly on matters of personal safety and occasionally on biological needs. Religion, patriotism, nationalism, honour, justice, economic, social and political equality and at



present the belief in the theory of the survival of the fittest, which is manifest in imperialism, fascism and nazicism, serve as sufficiently strong moral causes to plunge humanity into bloodshed. During normal times the intense interest that man takes in hunting, racing, bull-fights, duels, wrestling, boxing, news of accidents, deaths and warfare, is obviously inspired by the same tendency. Here it is clear why generally the film-producer introduces especially physical conflict between two groups in his story.

In his normal life man avoids pain and courts pleasure. The gratification of any instinctive desire is a source of considerable pleasure and happiness to him. Since some of the instinctive desires are regarded as vicious by the society, a terrible conflict between his cravings and the dictates of the society, ensues in his mind. If the consequent fear of the society is overcome by his irresistible cravings, he commits crimes. The society not only disassociates its sympathy from him but it inflicts punishment on him. This is the reason why the transgressor of social laws is always punished in the film in

order to satisfy the audience, although in actual life many a transgressor escapes punishment.

On the one hand the tendency that seeks pleasure is helpful in preserving and prolonging human life and on the other it is the root-cause of degeneration and depravity in man. All the productive virtues or habits, such as labour, industriousness, perseverance, punctuality, alirtness, duty, dicipline, honesty, integrity, adequate control over disruptive emotions and sentiments, etc., involve painful striving, which his pleasure-tendency often resents. Since the foundation of the virtues is laid down on the eruptive grounds by suppressing the natural instinctive force, the tendency undermines the very foundation in weaker moments. If a woman happens to break once her chastity, which is the outcome of a habitual suppression of two instinctive forces, viz. sex and variety, she is likely to break it very often, as is the case with the prostitutes. Similarly any productive habit mentioned above, gets disused in weaker moments, degeneration sets in. Life is a prolonged conflict between this tendency and the productive habits. In fact the rise and fall of all nations depends upon the results

of this conflict. All lethargic and vicious habits are quite in harmony with the instinctive cravings. They therefore develop rapidly without resistance but require considerable effort to get disused. The productive habits are opposed to the instincts and they therefore develop with persistent effort and break with the least effort.

Since the objects of highest desires such as wealth, power, fame, comfort, happiness, etc. cannot be generally achieved without persistent efforts and without useful habits, man has discovered shortest cuts to his aspirations, viz. belief in fate, and the supernatural powers of certain objects, saints and dieties to whom he prays for their fulfilment. In his conception of paradise and in his fairy tales the same spirit of getting things done without painful efforts is found working. This particular aspect of the pleasure-tendency is widely exploited by the Indian producer. Where the hero should achieve his objective through combating, a sadhu or a fakir is introduced with supernatural powers who solves the hero's problems quite easily.

As all that is pleasant excites the instinct of self-preservation of the audience, so does

all that is fearful and threatening to their life and interests. Since the audience associate themselves with the hero of the story, and consequently feel that his successes and failures, his anxieties and reliefs, his dangers and escapes, his friends and enemies are their own, the emotion of fear, which is one of the most powerful factors that influences human behaviour towards men and things, is the object of extensive exploitation by the director especially in tragic themes. Anything that threatens the life or the interests of the hero gives rise to anxiety and fear among the audience. If we study any successful tragedy we invariably discover two distinct factors, viz. one is the nature of the aim of the hero for which he strives and the other is the external and internal conditions which prevent or help the achievement of that aim. His aim, be it sincere love for a girl, or some good principle, creates sympathy among the audience because it is appealing to some of their instincts. Their sympathy for the hero's aim is strengthened if they find in him some good traits as well. When, with the sympathy of the audience the hero marches forward in quest of his object, giving rise to some pleasant incidents at the same time especially in the

beginning of his march, difficulties arise, the audience naturally grow anxious. Among the various kinds of difficulties that generally beset in his way, that which concerns the social status of his or his beloved's family is the most important. In most cases the father takes up the cause of his family's honour and plays the tyrant. Consequently a triangular conflict between filial duty, family honour and sincere love ensues. When all the three conflicting elements are regarded as virtues by the society, it becomes trying on the part of the audience which side to have their sympathy drifted. If the conflict were to be between sincere love and the father's economic considerations or the evilsome interference of the stepmother, it will be quite easy for the audience to decide which side to sympathise with. A conflict between one virtue and another, not between a virtue and a vice, enables the audience to think and differentiate between values and values. Such a stimulation of thought benefits them in two ways. Firstly they vividly realize the unhealthy side of some of the virtues most of which have been blindly inherited and accepted from the primitive ages. Secondly they are made to feel the necessity to revalue the old virtues and establish new ones.



Miss GOHAR



## CHAPTER II.

# Some Successful films Examined.

### The New Theatres.

Under the light of the preceding chapter which attempts to lay down some principles of appeal to the mind of the audience, let us examine a few of the successful plays such as “Dev Das”, “the President”, the “Manzil” the “Maya”, “Anath Ashram” and “Vidya-pati” and explain why they have succeeded and how they could have achieved greater success if their producers had applied themselves with greater seriousness and care.

To begin with “Dev Das”, which rightly brought the New Theatres into prominence for the first time, presents a tragic theme which, though sufficiently facinating in itself, is not convincing in the logical development of action. The basis of conflict between love and filial duty is as mean as it is stale. It is the economic ground that forms the basis of respectability of Dev Das’ family and it is on the same ground that Dev Das hesitates



to take a risk in marrying his beloved. "Where will you live if I marry you against the will of my parents?", he asks Parvati when she presses him to marry her. He is unable, like a child, to provide food and shelter to a girl for whom he ultimately gives up his life.

The factors that undermine the union of the lovers miserably lack in vigour and effectiveness. The difference between their social status does not seem to trouble Dev Das' mind as much as it ought to. Nor does the same reason raise sufficiently strong protest from his parents against his marriage. Not even once his parents directly protest to him against the proposal. Only once his mother meekly and politely expresses her unwillingness to Parvati's mother. His father, however, approves her refusal, but this he does in the absence of Dev Das. There has never been an irresistible protest from his parents. And yet Dev Das is made to suffer and sacrifice his life for a girl who sincerely loves him and who is ready to marry him. The remark of Chandra, the dancing girl, that he is indifferent to her as well as to Parvati just because they have confessed their love to him, is far-fetched and is a clumsy justification

for his real impotency. It is strange that The New Theatres have created two more impotent lovers, viz. "Mohim" in the Manzil, and Dr. Saithi in the "President". They are both ill-conceived and ill-constructed.

When the starting point of the theme is so illogically unconvincing, the tragic events that follow lose their power of appeal to the audience, with the result that the hero is not able to draw as much sympathy as does the heroine. Although the prolonged suffering and some interesting sequences divert the attention of the average audience from the defects such as these, the intelligent observer cannot help despising the hero for his meanness, lack of assertion and heroic qualities. There is nothing inevitable in the course of events in order to justify the miseries which both of them are made to suffer. The causes that give rise to these miseries are controllable and are also easily avoidable. Even the average man feels that way when he is watching the film. The tragic incidents are forced rather than inevitable. For disappointed lovers to get to drink is an easy and stale device usually adopted in order to enable them to work out their own ruin. Disappointment in love generally gives rise to neurosis, and a

neurotic personality is much more interesting than that of a drunkard like Dev Das. In actual life the majority of the disappointed lovers do not get addicted to drink, but they invariably develop neurosis. Among the neurotics you will find the genius, the over-religious, the over-superstitious, the whimsical, the fanatic, the sadist, and the masochist, the most aggressive and the most meak, the most bold and the greatest coward, the enthusiastic reformer and the sublime artist, the despicable drunkard as well as the desperate criminal, the law-giver as well as the law-breaker. A neurotic personality is generally the extreme type. For dramatising these personalities much depends upon your selection. A neurotic criminal is much more interesting than a neurotic drunkard. Similarly a neurotic is more interesting than even a man of sound mind. There is an inexhaustible variety among the disappointed lovers and to select frequently only the drunkard to represent the tragic personality is to betray the limited knowledge of human affairs.

The sequence of the dancing girl, though very interesting in itself, serves only as a substitute to what the main theme really lacks in its stirring scenes. Except two all the songs are meaningless and have no bearing on the

development of the action. The presence of the blind singer is rather a disturbing element in the plot. There is something artificial about the married life of Parvati.

Here a question naturally arises: Why did Dev Das succeed inspite of these defects?. The reasons are obvious. There is generally certain amount of predisposition among the audience towards some stars. Secondly love-stories, especially when they are well told, are interesting in themselves. Dev Das presents a really interesting love them. Parvati impresses the audience as an unquestionably sincere lover with moral courage and sense of self-respect. Like her even Deva Das is regarded as a victim of uncontrollable circumstances by the average spectator. Their disappointment and their consequent prolonged sufferings with the occasional abortive appearance of their suppressed love in a most psychological manner so masterly worked out by the director, draws out the full sympathy of the audience. The opening scene, the two visits of Parvati to Deva Das, the entire sequence of Chandra, the dancing girl, the scene of the singing cart-man while Deva Das is dying, and the incidents such as Parvati's negligence of the boiling rice

are so stirring that the audience have hardly time to brood over the defects of the story. Besides the acting of almost all the characters more particularly of Jamna, Saigal and Rajkumari is undoubtedly superb. The character of especially Parvati and Chandra is consistent and natural.

The "**President**", like "**Deva Das**", presents a tragic theme. In this as in the other, two girls love the same person with almost equal sincerity. The fact that in the case of the former the two girls happen to be sisters, the interest is heightened. Wealth, education, social status, beauty, sincere love—the factors that contribute to the development of love, are not lacking while in "**Deva Das**" one girl is poor and the other is destitute of social status. In the **President** the hero is poor and the heroine is rich and in "**Deva Das**" the case is the reverse. In one case love begins from childhood and in the other through an accidental meeting. In the former the disturbing or the tragic element is purely sentimental and in the latter mainly economic. In the **President** the plot is more complex, life and characters are more varied, characterisation is more perfect, incidents are more interesting, ideals are higher, senti-

ments are noble, tragic intensity is deeper without being too painful or disgusting, the logical development of the story is more convincing, acting more natural, emotional outburst more arresting, comical situations are more harmonious and songs are more befitting than what they are in "Deva Das".

The conflict between the love of the two loving sisters is not as stale and over-worked as the conflict between love and filial duty. The first spark of love between Shaila and Prakash, without the knowledge of each other's social and economic status, the gradual development of love of Parvati for Prakash or of the employer for the employed and the consequent rapid promotions and favours showered on Prakash, the mental conflict of Prakash to make a choice between the beloved and the benefactor, between love and ruin, the part played by Dinu both as an interpreter of the comic situations arising out of Parvati's unusual behaviour towards an ordinary mill-worker of her own mill, and as a sincere friend with all his human weaknesses, the home atmosphere and the relations of Prakash, the analogy of the story of a Prince and the Princess as related by

Prakash — all these are the interesting features of the President. Parvati with her pride and meakness, discipline and kind-heartedness, suppressed sex and sexual cravings, love and restraint, mental conflict between love and filial sentiments, youth and the spirit of sacrifice, Shaila with her youthful geity, modern spirit of freedom, wisdom of the old people and the sentiments of the middle ages, and Prakash with his noble sense of responsibility to the family, the right ideal of duty and efficiency, sincere feelings of love and friendship, human incapacity to overcome a conflict between the two equally powerful ideals, duty to the beloved and the duty to the group, provide an insight into the workings of human mind.

The President is undoubtedly superior to most of the pictures hitherto produced both by the New Theatres and other Companies in India particularly in its selection of material of essentially human interest and also in its method of presenting that material. The weaving of the comic element with the rapid development of tragic events without marring the serious mood of the audience produced in consequence of the tragic theme, is unrivalled and should serve as a model to the Indian producers.

This method of dealing with the comic situations in the plot, does away, perhaps, for the first time, with the introduction of two apish figures, usually isolated or loosely connected with a serious theme, very often disturbing the mood of the audience. The way of surprising the audience by discovering and exposing something common in the words uttered by two persons appearing in two different scenes one immediately following the other, we think, belongs exclusively to the New Theatres. Although, at present, this method has got all the glamour of novelty, there appears to be already a tendency to over-use it as is evident in the President itself.

Be that as it may. One great merit of this tragedy is that the tragic events succeed one another both inevitably and logically so that when the hero is consequently placed under a dilemmatic position and feels himself helpless, the audience realize that his difficulties are not only unvoidable but are also the natural consequences of natural antecedents, unlike those of Dev Das.

With all its merits the President does not reach the high ideal. It does not arouse among the spectators the intensified concern for the hero and the heroine. Prakash



Sheila and Parvati have been depicted with likeable virtues and when the danger that threatens their vital interests arises from among themselves, our sympathies are divided. The danger does not come from the side of the devil. The interest of one angel threatens the interest of another angel. Our sympathies, therefore, are not drifted on one side so that we may feel concerned for that side alone. We are simply bewildered. Neither pity nor fear nor admiration is excited. We pass through three-fourth of the drama feeling that it is a comedy. The way that the story begins requires double the number of reels, in order to produce the desired effect. To sufficiently deepen the love of both Sheila and Parvati for Prakash and Prakash's love for Sheila more than half a dozen scenes seem missing. From the utter indifference of Sheila to Prakash as revealed in the motor accident to her taking Prakash's used food indicating deep sincerity there is a clear leap; and there are no leaps in nature. Similarly there are gaps in the stages of the growth of Parvati's love and her rapid promotions given to Prakash. The audience do not however feel these gaps just because in her rapid promotions to her

beloved they get one of their most powerful cravings gratified. Consequently their attention is diverted from those gaps. It is the human nature to secure desirable objects without efforts. To see the hero, with whom the audience have got themselves associated, get a young, beautiful, rich girl with the power of raising both the economic and the social status of an ordinary mill-worker of her own mill, without the least effort, is immensely pleasing. There is, of course, a certain continuity in the feelings of love of Prakash for Sheila, as is evident from his constant out-burst of love songs, but the singing of love-songs are not as powerful in their effect as generally the incidents of love are, which miserably lack.

Nor does the President ascend to a sufficient height in establishing new values or in revaluing the old values. Conflict between two virtues, love for Sheila and duty to the benefactor, Parvati, and indirectly to the family and Dinu, the sincere friend, does not present a sharp contrast between these two virtues, because both the girls love Prakash equally sincerely. Parvati is not only his sincere lover but she is also his bene-

factor. To argue mathematically, if Prakash loves Sheila, not Parvati, the argument is balanced. Again the contrast between the love of the two loving sisters for the same person is not also too marked, for both are sincere and both are prepared to sacrifice their interests for the sake of each other. Instead of establishing new values or re-valuing the old ones, the President, like many other third rate plays, lays emphasis on the old virtues. The only point of merit is the way it does it.

Tragedy is the highest form of literature that portrays human life. While the Comedian laughs out the human miseries, the Tragedian weeps over them. The latter excites your protective emotions, pity and fear not with the intention of making you miserable. He wants you to be serious and think seriously when the vital problems of human life are presented to you. He discovers the root-cause of human miseries in you and unravels this mystery of cause and effect. His main aim in so doing is to create a harmony between the asocial cravings of the individual and the demands of the society and to effect a compromise between these

two ever conflicting forces by pointing out the limitations of the one and by exposing the aggressive demands of the other. He makes you realize that the same desires which are pulsating in your heart are also pulsating with equal force in the hearts of those with whom you live. He prepares you to control the consequent bitter conflict with all the wisdom and energy you command. In addition to this he provides you with an insight into the intricate workings of human mind, how you deceive yourself more than you deceive others in matters of your social, religious and political life, how sometimes you are subjected to certain sentiments which are detrimental either to you or the society or to both, and how most of the virtues that control your life and the life of your society are the remnants of the savage days under which the humanity has been struggling.

The real Tragedian presents the hard realities of life and depicts the laws of nature that govern human life and social inter-action in their true colours. His world is so constituted that nothing happens without a cause, that the same cause produces the same effect and that nature has no sentiments.

If you examine the President under these maxims you realize that it falls short of your ideal. It is just an improvement over plays which generally deal with 'goody, goody' things. We have yet to wait for plays which can successfully combine business with the vital interests of humanity. Whatever its drawbacks we cannot help congratulating its producers for the many merits it undoubtedly contains.

The plot of the "Manzil" is ill-constructed and illogical and the theme is trivial. The major characters are inconsistent and incomplete. Suraish is neither a devil nor a human being. He is a simple lump of flesh meaninglessly tossed from the pool into the ditch and vice versa. Mohim is a lover who lacks potency and manhood. He is neither a good husband nor a wise friend. He vainly strives to serve both God and the Devil at the same time. Achala has neither intelligence nor passions. There is neither complete harmony nor a complete disharmony between her head and her heart. She is an incomplete and inconsistent being who mostly drifts through an external pressure. Kedar is neither an efficient pimp nor a wise father. He lacks in the harmonious blending of virtue and vice.

The conflict between love and friendship is as stale as it is trivial. If the conflict happens to be between a good wife and a good friend, it may give rise to a dilemma and may for that reason create some interest. When for Mohim the choice lies between a faithful wife and a villainous friend, his path is clear. The story is dragged on with clumsy and illogical methods. Mohim is made to remember Suraish with tender feelings when he ought to have shot him dead. Worst still, Achala is made to serve her husband as an accomplice to provide easy chances to the villain to continue his havoc. Suraish appears to possess the mysterious powers of performing miracles. He drops unperceptably into the house of Mohim whenever the latter remembers him just to make further improper advances to his wife. Mohim's lack of anger shocks even the masochist, like whom he seems to suffer. To drag the story on Suraish is made to elope an unwilling, modern and educated girl from a train in which her husband is also travelling after having witnessed several of his villainous acts. There is no physical pressure either. If by mistake she has alighted and got into another train she could have at once

wired both to her husband and her father without creating any suspicion in their minds and related to them the actual facts. The plot has not been so psychologically worked out as to suspect the existence of a subconscious desire in Achla to link her life with Suraish's. The subsequent events evidently point out that she had not such a desire. As Suraish's medical assistance rendered to Mohim once upon a time in this modern age of changed sentiments has been serving as a lame excuse for the leniency of both the husband and wife towards the villain. The forced and imaginary helplessness of Achla on this occasion forms as a similar excuse for her to abandon the husband whom she so sincerely loves, and stay with Suraish so that the story may be prolonged.

We thus see in the Manzil the art of developing action lacks in logic. Nor do we find anything meritorious in acting. The constant close-ups of both Mohim and Achala indicate, time in and time out, a hidden volcanic material that never bursts out. Suraish, with his heavy, unmanagable body and unsuited stage-gestures, renders an impression of not only over-acting but wrong-acting.

The episodes of the village Brahmin, of the unknown traveller with six of his children, and of Mohim's sister, the symbolic construction and destruction of the toy-house by Mohim's pupils, are original and interesting. The representation of Suraish's conscience in a concrete form would have been equally interesting had it not been isolated.

The jealousy excited in Achla on account of Marnal is illogical and unconvincing. Nor is it sufficiently deep. Any girl with average intelligence easily understands the motive of a person like Mohim when he forces Marnal, who is an orphan entirely dependent on him, to marry an old man of seventy. He could have married without any difficulty had he any feeling of love for her. The fact is that Achala's jealousy, forced as it is, is used as a device to justify Achala's apparent drift towards Suraish and the consequent misunderstanding of Mohim that serves as a pivot for the further development of the action of the plot.

"Maya" is much superior to Manzil in the construction of its plot, selection of powerful and expressive incidents, incentives to deeper emotions, characterisation, as well as the



ideals it advocates. Pratab, the son of a millionaire abandons a socially well-placed girl for her advanced modernism, prefers a relative of her who is labouring under poverty and oppression, secretly marries her with almost religious sincerity and zeal, ultimately gains the sympathy of his father who offers opposition in the beginning undergoes terrible sufferings and hardships on her behalf, remains true to her to the end, accepts and welcomes her without any suspicion after her prolonged absence and stands opposed to the hollowness and tyranny of the society. He is a sincere lover, a loving father, an obedient son, a man of sound judgement, moral courage and high ideals. Crushed under poverty and oppression Maya, his wife, develops a sort of meakness, but the way she maintains her chastity till the end in the midst of crushing poverty, starvation, abandonment, violent beggars, thieves and decoits, is marvellous and admirable. She even begs and boldly faces blasphemies in order to protect her son.

The other characters in the picture are real human beings like Pratab and Maya. Shanta is clumsily modern, aggressive, hot-

tempered, assertive and shrewd while her mother, in view of her age, is less aggressive towards Maya but more keenly interested in the welfare of her own daughter. Pratab's father behaves as a loving and a wise father. The locality, the environment and the group of beggers are as real as they are in real life. Mahabir, with his lawlessness, criminal-mindedness and shrewdness, and his wife with her womanly jealousy and sympathy, his companion with his unscrupulousness and cunning, and the blind begger with his noble-mindedness generally found amidst such a group, are marvellous portraits of reality.

The way the director of the picture deepens the sympathy of the audience for both the hero and the heroine without giving rise to disgustingly painful feeling is much superior to what he does in *Dev Das*, the *President* and the *Manzil*. The heroine is a helpless orphan, meek and virtuous, and is placed under the protection of her relatives who are neither too cruel nor too kind to her. She lives here as half servant and half relative with restrictions often placed on her personal freedom. Shanta as a too modernized girl serves as a contrast to her.

Since the audience have always sympathy for those who suffer under poverty, the poor Maya is awarded, by the grace of God, with a sincere lover who is also a millionaire. Then comes a thunderbolt from a good person, that is the father of Pratab. At his instance the evil forces join against her and drive her out from her house while her husband is out of station. Then the mad fury of the society pursues her with the usual cruelty and thoughtlessness. Deprived of her protecting and loving husband and despised by the society, she turns into a begger and lives in the locality of beggars some of whom very often behave like blood-hounds. She has now to protect a child whom she has to leave alone whenever she is out for begging. A lonely child, hungry and crying for the company of his mother presents a pathetic scene. And at such a moment when the child is offered a small coin by a scoundrel like Mahabir with the unconcealed intention to gain the sympathy of his mother who is both young and beautiful, and is threatened with cruel treatment, our sympathy for Maya deepens, especially so when we witness on the other side her husband frantically moving heaven and earth in search of the mother and the child, suffering disappointments, avoiding all the

pleasurable indulgences, striving to releive himself of painful feelings under intoxication, calling back the memory of the child at the sight of the objects belonging to others children as a mad and grieved father. When Maya loses her child and in her consequent frenzied moments accidentally strikes to death her aggressor and appears at the court accused of murder and when the companion of the murdered man unscrupulously produces false evidence and when her own husband, without knowing her indentity, appears to plead for the other party and stands accusing her of deliberate murder, we cannot help anxiously praying for her safety. It is but for the happy ending of the picture and for the introduction of elements capable of relieving tension to some extent such as the sympathy and parental love of the blind begger for her and her child under trying situations, the play would have been a disgustingly painful tragedy.

A sereo-comic play, such as "Maya," appeals more powerfully to the cinema audience than does a pure tragedy or a pure comedy. Although Maya is not free from inconsistencies and clumsy devices used for

developing the action—as for example Maya's foolish silence when Pratab passes just by her side while on his way to the theatre, and also the lack of an attempt on her part to find out Pratab especially when she miraculously knew that he has been staying so near that a phaeton could carry her to the spot within a few minutes—these are very few and are ignored in view of the height of interest that the picture excites.

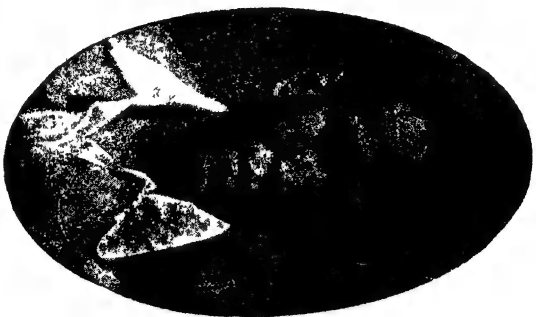
A word in connection with the song “Gai Ja, Gai Ja”. This song is repeated throughout the play and as it is repeated it gathers momentum. It stirs you and stirs everybody. It is an outburst of a universal feeling under the most befitting situations created by the nature of the theme and the course of events in the life of the lovers. Except on the first occasion when it is sung, it maintains a harmony with the dramatic content and unlike other songs, helps the development of action. When Pratab, in order to find out the identity of the child, sings the song, the effect on the audience is magical. It is more effective than any conceivable incident intended to convey the same meaning and produce the same effect. We are here reminded of a

similar song sung before a dying child of a peasant woman who had died on account of a contagious disease and who used to sing every day that song in order to make him sleep. When the subjects of an Indian Queen are terror-stricken on account of the havoc the epidemic has played, she takes pity on the child, lifts him up in her own arms, takes him into the palace, places him into the cradle. The child cannot sleep. He repeatedly calls his dead mother. His grieved father, along with some of the peasants, is standing at some distance watching the kind queen and the dying child. When the queen assures the child that she is his mother, he denies saying that his mother used to sing a song before he went to sleep. It is then the Queen sings the same song which his mother used to sing. While the Queen is singing the child dies. We are all moved while we watch the incident.

We do not remember the name of the picture in which this incident occurs. But the way these two songs have been used in a proper atmosphere and in a right mood, should serve as a model to the Indian producers. We may assure them here that songs in the Indian pictures are only substitutes to really

stirring incidents. It is only in the absence of such incidents that the Indian audience give preference to songs. Time has not come for the producers to realize that there is higher poetry and sweeter music in incidents than in songs.

The real interest, in "**Anath Ashram,**" centres round the situations created by the nature of the theme. The widow marriage which forms the theme of the story, is not in itself interesting, and is devoid of novelty. Sarojini, a widow, is married to a young man, named Ramesh, who is kept in the dark as to the knowledge of her widowhood. Consequently fear of exposure constantly dominates the mind of Sarojini. Threatening situations quickly follow one another. Ranjit, who had been refused her hand in marriage, unexpectedly discovers that she has been married to a cousin of his who is under the impression that she is a virgin. Ranjit, like a villain, revengefully threatens to expose her. She consequently suffers from acute mental conflict. The good side of Ranjit's nature, however, prevents him from exposing her. Soon another danger threatens her. Her locket which contains the photo of her former



Mr. DEVIKA BOSE



Miss DEVIKA RANI





husband accidentally falls into Ramesh's hand, who, therefore, accuses her of illegal connections with another man. But Sarojini cleverly drives out his suspicions. Another awkward situation soon follows. Her child, who had been kept in an ashram in order to avoid Ramesh's suspicions, accidentally discovers his mother at a shop. The child frantically and pathotically addresses her as 'mother', but, afraid of being exposed, she disclaims the child and hurries with her husband in spite of her motherly promptings. The final stroke falls on her when the child is lost, and when, consequently frantic efforts are made to secure the child, the telegram conveying the information about the child, gets into the hands of Ramesh. He now feels convinced that the child is the product of her illegal connections and the entire picture of her past indifferent and dubious attitude and the connected incidents comes before his mind, Sarojini is consequently subjected to his violent handling, intense mental conflict, humiliation, grief and anxiety.

Due to her widowhood during her young age, the death of a loving husband, the loss of a happy home-life, her pathotic motherhood,

audience. This is one of the main reasons why tragedies on the screen have been failing.

There is less inconsistency and less incompleteness in characters except in the case of Ranjit. The early part of the picture describing the burning of the mine and the consequent death of Kailash is unnecessary and is advantageously avoidable, for it does not adequately contribute to the action of the play. The picture could have begun with the life of the widow. The Ashram sequence, though a necessary part of the story, provides a side-tracking interest. There is a complete lack of psychological insight into the workings of human mind when attempts are made to secure a husband for the widow. If the basic factors that contribute to the sentiment of virginity and the consequent aversion for widows, were to be analysed and exposed in pictorial action at a sufficient length, the interest in the story would have considerably heightened. Instead a quick succession of simple refusals is exhibited. Though the end of the play is happy, it does not impress the audience as such, for it miserably lacks in the outburst of proper

emotions on the part of the hero and the heroine as well as their surroundings.

Acting, more particularly of Uma Devy, Jagadish, Najmul Hasan, Nawab and Singh, is commendable. Uma Devy is superb especially in her expressions of conflicting emotions. Prithviraj is, as usual, clumsy in his deportment, gestures and facial expressions. Nawab who is generally a fine actor, is aping, in this picture, some of the artifices of Prabhat, and has thereby lowered the quality of the comic side of his acting.

There are no thrilling songs in "Anath Ashram".

The theme of "Vidyapati" consists of two distinct theories of spiritualism viz. the sublimation of sexual love into spiritual love, and the representation of the Guru as the embodiment of God. The two theories are so mixed up that the meaning of the theme is not easily comprehended. Besides, the incidents describing the drift of the sexual to the spiritual love are so weak in their power of expressiveness that the audience hardly make a distinction between the two kinds of  
of the picture

that the audience are acquainted with the distinction not by means of concrete incidents but through dialogue. If we take away a few of the words addressed to the Maharani by Anuradha and to the deity by Vidyapati concerning the distinction between the two kinds of love, the entire love-theme will appear essentially sexual in its character in spite of the religious environment in the picture.

The development of the theme into a pictorial action betrays a lack of psychological insight into the natural process of sublimation. A thwarted love is capable of being sublimated only into the aesthetic and the religious. The process of sublimation, according to the Fruedian school, is unconscious. If a girl who has failed in her love, consciously wants to transform it into that of God, she cannot succeed in her attempt, much less does she in realizing the merging of the personality of her beloved into that of God as the Maharani and Anuradha vainly strive to do. So far the attitude of the Maharani towards Vidyapati is concerned, her love for him has been essentially sexual till her death. The Maharani and Anuradha's

statement that the suppression of the fleshy in them leads them to the Spirit, stands as an isolated utterance without affecting the sexual nature of the theme, because the events in their life follow one another in contradiction to that statement. Even the childish appeals to the deity for help or in despair betray the power of sex on the Maharani. Anuradha's active sympathy for her rival, the Maharani, is a somersault intended to justify the purity of their love for Vidyapati. The lack of potent jealousy in the Maharaja, and of human traits in Vidyapati aims at the same justification. The Maharaja conceals his impotency, the lack of self-respect and the moral sense under the garb of his belief in the spiritual love of his wife for a handsome young man who moves the hearts of the women of the country with his melodious songs. The young man is portrayed neither as a human being, nor as a God, nor even as a devil. He belongs neither to heaven nor to Hell. He is a being not known to this humble Earth of ours. In an attempt to describe the drift of the sexual to the spiritual love hopelessly inconsistent characters have been created. There is not a single character in the entire story that is consistent and complete. The

Mahamantry is a motiveless creature who hates Vidyapati for the magnetic power of his songs; instead of destroying him he destroys his victims. He lacks in the intellect and the resourcefulness of a villain. His whole role in the story does not go beyond two insignificant incidents. He lies to the Maharaja that the enemy has crossed his frontiers and the Maharaja consequently leaves the capital for a time. His absence in no way affects the march of events at home. The Mahamantry gains nothing by driving him out to the front. The whole incident seems to be motiveless. When the Maharaja discovers the falsity of his report, he does not get angry with him. In fact nothing is mentioned about the incident to the Mahamantry. His attempt to detain the Maharaja on the front is as clumsy as it is motiveless. He gains power neither on the Maharani nor on Vidyapati during his absence. It is just on the eve of the arrival of the Maharaja that he succeeds in handing over the bottle of poison to the Maharani more like a physician than like a villain for she is already prepared to kill herself under her own sense of guilt for the love of a person other than her husband. She does not therefore kill herself

under the influence of his intrigue. She is prompted to kill herself by another motive as well. She thinks that by destroying her body she can attain her spiritual love. Foolish as the idea is, her death is not the inevitable result of the march of events in her life, unless we regard her as a woman of diseased mind. She could save herself by relinquishing her home-life and plunging herself in devotion to God or the Deities. In the enthusiasm of giving a tragic twist at the end of the serio-comic stories, the "New Theatres" have spoiled many a picture as they have done in the case of "Vidyapati".

The way the Maharani falls in love with Vidyapati is as unnatural as it is ridiculous. In the midst of a grove and at a distance of two or three yards stand the young poet and the Maharani and when he begins to sing she 'drinks' the melody, of his song. And when she moves a little forward and looks at him, her 'drinking' deepens. Suddenly pierced with love she darts out towards the temple where, in despair, she unfolds her heart to the deity as one who has been suffering for years. Immediately after this incident they meet again in the presence of her



husband, who introduces her to him. On knowing that he is the famous poet and an old friend of her husband, her love is intensified and she stands absorbed in love-thoughts with her eyes closed as if drinking deep his love. No moral scruples trouble her mind, nor does her husband take notice of her strange attitude when he wakes her up from her reverie. Soon a curious incident occurs. At a court scene the poet is asked to sing. When he sings her eyes once more close. At this time she drinks his love more deeply than before. Abruptly she takes out her necklace and handing it over to Anuradha, asks her to put it on the neck of the young poet as a token of admiration and love. Her indecorous act is naturally resented by the courtiers. Especially the Mahamantry is most vehement in his denunciation of her behaviour. The Maharaja is shameless enough to take this serious incident lightly, and after giving a childish but dramatic surprise, he puts the necklace himself round the neck of the poet. While giving the surprise the Maharaja talks of punishing Anuradha, The mere mention of punishment upsets the mental balance of the Maharani, who, after rhapsodic utterances of

fear and sympathy, becomes unconscious. The whole scene seems to be an embodiment of absurdity.

During the absence of the Maharaja she writes a letter to him, and she is so much overpowered with love that she signs the name of Vidyapati instead of her own. This device, intended as it is, to indicate that the personality of the Maharani has completely immersed in that of Vidyapati, falls flat on the audience.

Another equally absurd incident occurs in the absence of Maharaja. She meets Vidyapaty and boldly confesses her love for him. As a saint with a highly developed moral sense, he tells her to her face that to love a person other than her husband is a serious guilt. Her sense of guilt is consequently aroused, so that it looms heavy thenceforward on her life as the burden of a song until at last it brings about her tragic end.

How does she die? She does not pine to death. Nor does she suddenly and secretly commit suicide. She gives the credit of killing her to the villain of the story who

approaches her as a physician and as a benefactor. She is as courteous as the Maharaja himself and feels sorry when the villain exerts some effort in opening the cork of the poison bottle.

The comic in the picture is as absurd as the theme, the plot and the characterisation are. Badoshak lacks in the intelligence of a court fool. Nor his appearance is significant of the part he plays in the picture. His jokes are of the lower type. In his frantic pursuit after his wife he fails to excite laughter when he catches another woman by mistake because the audience are not well acquainted with his wife by this time in order to make a distinction between the two women. The comic situation arising out of his suspicion about his wife's illegal connections with his servant is not of a high quality. Nor his errand to the front suggestive and capable of occasioning an uproar of laughter. The episode is too loosely constructed. The way that Anuradha forces herself on Vidya-pati in order to accompany him to the court is, of course, as novel as it is commendable. So is her meeting with Badoshak in the palace garden where she sings a

beautiful song to him. His disinterestedness in the song and her enthusiasm to sing it out to the finish are suggestive of mirth and glee.

In "Vidyapati" Kanan Devi impresses us as an artist capable of higher acting. She marvellously controls the quick succession of conflicting emotions with ease although the story, as it is, does not guarantee for such occasions.

Considerable interest centres round the photographic details and effective shots that are spread throughout the picture. Stirring situations there are none. Effective incidents there are very few. The picture lacks in the court atmosphere and the court manners. A great theme is muddled up with two diametrically different ideas which consequently give rise to confusion. It is strange that the director who is capable of constructing the Soap Factory episode in the "Sunhera Sangsar" could so miserably fail in conceiving expressive incidents and stirring situations.

## CHAPTER IV.

# Some Successful Films Examined. (Ctd.)

The Prabhat Film Co.

“Amar-Jyoti” presents a stupid story which lacks both in a well-constructed plot and well conceived characters. The theme is governed by two diametrically different motives which lose their force as the story develops. In the beginning we are given to understand that the chief motive of Saudamani’s revolt against the established authority of the Maharani is her revenge, the consequence of the inhuman treatment of the latter to the former in connection with her son. Very soon another motive-force creeps into her attitude, not so much towards her enemy, the Maharani, at this time, but towards her opposite sex. This is not only a leap but a somersault, redirecting the spirit of revenge from the individual of one sex to the group of its opposite sex. A sort of shifting is thus effected both in the motive-force and its objective. When the major as well as the

minor premises are wrong, the nature of conclusion is obvious. Saudamini rides, at one and the same time, on two horses that are inequal in their height and speed, and as a natural consequence she falls not only miserably but without the sympathy of her surroundings.

Let us, for the time being, suppose that her reaction, viz. the desire to attain freedom and manhood for the womanfolk, is the natural consequence of a natural antecedent. How does she attain it? She has turned into a decoit already and has thus lost the chance of working as a reformer by living in the midst of her society. The only means left for her is the organised physical force without the moral sympathy usually extended to conquerors. What is her force? It consists mainly of men perhaps a dozen or two. She is accompanied by one solitary thin girl who lacks the vitality of a grown up man of resolution and push. The men are placed under a leadership which openly aims at destroying the superiority of their own class. Her first act is her attack on the ship of the Maharani and her vain attempt to burn to death the princess, Nandini, the daughter of the Maharani,

This act of her seems to be inspired more by her spirit of vengence against the Maharani than by her ideal to achieve freedom and manhood for the womanfolk. Her second step in persuit of her aim is the unseen despatch of one or two women as her spies to the capital of the Maharani. Here she comes, with the air of the mystery-man accompanied by Rekha, the thin girl and her father, Shekhar. Like a woman of great exploits, she comes across a public notice demanding her capture with the bait of a high prize. With the courage of Rustum and the cunning of Col. Lawrence, she enters the town alone asking her two companions to await her return. She meets her woman-spies but before she uttered more than one sentence, she is recognized and pursued by Kundan and the police. Here we witness her prodigal feats in her clumsy attempt to hide herself in a fallen building which unluckily lacks in underground passages. When the vain search of the police takes some time, her two companions naturally grow restless. One of them, that is Rekha, enters the town in the garb of a 'Jogen' singing a song whose purpet is "We are anxious about you; come out from your hiding place". She is so far wise. She

is likewise recognized and pursued immediately. Next her second companion, Shekhar, enters the scene in the garb of a Sadhu and with his miraculous cleverness he saves his party somehow.

Saudamini's third step in pursuit of her ideal is equally ridiculous. She discovers Nandini in her own hiding resort. At first hot words pass between the two. When Saudamini, however, realizes that Nandini is the only daughter of her bitter enemy, a wave of vengence passes through her mind. She orders for her arrest. Just then she is advised by Shekhar to convert her to her ideal. Nandini whom she addresses as her own daughter, is not only dramatically but also miraculously converted within a minute. Consequently she gives up her lover, Sudheer, whom she sincerely loves, and promises to assist the enemy of her own mother.

Nandini is her second deciple, the first being Rekha, the process of whose conversion we have not been fortunate enough to watch. Beyond these two, the great philosopher Amazon with her great ideal never achieves a third conquest in her life-time.







Mr. MOTILAL—Miss SABITA DEVI—Miss. BIBBO

Even these two do not come upto the mark. Nandini, immediately after her conversion bursts out into a passionate love-song, while Rekha, with her undeceptive womanly appearance indulges in beautifying her person. Why, the great leader herself does not reach the mark. With all the tender feelings of a woman and a mother, she preserves the clothes of her child all along and she sheds tears for him not less than three times. With the unnatural callousness and the lack of wisdom to convince her son of her own identity, she abandons everything she loves, without a sufficient cause, absolves Nandini of her oath, and disappears into airy nothing.

Let us proceed further. The love episode of Nandini and Sudheer, in its meaningless and isolated artistic surroundings, is as illogically developed as the main theme itself. Though she talks of suffocation, Nandini comes out of a box afresh without the signs of a suffocated woman. She finds herself in captivity. Durjay, in heavy chains, informs her of the place and its attendant dangers. He is intended by the producers of the picture to impress us as a Robinson Crusoe, but we

take him as a ghost who lacks in the originality of Crusoe. The first spark of love enkindles him. Like a man who has lost both hands and legs he lifts a piece of bread with his mouth and offers it to Nandini. Both the sides realize that it is an act of great sacrifice. Next his sexual impulse prompts him. In order to appear attractive he cuts his beard with a piece of stone, a novel method that would puzzle even Crusoe. In spite of these efforts he remains a ghost.

Instead of asking Nandini to find out the means to set him free, he advises her to go out and enjoy herself in the open air. Here she finds herself amidst a forest and in the atmosphere of "As you Like It". The beautiful river, the brook, the sun, the trunks of trees, bushes and stones and even the thorns contribute to her mood and she regards herself as the Queen of all that she surveys. Like a poet she bursts out into poetry at the sight of every object she comes across. No fear that is generally attendant to strange places, wild and unknown forests, no grief of her own captivity, no thought of finding means to release Durjaya and no threatening danger from her

captivators, disturb her mood. In this remote forest which the pirates have particularly selected for their safety, she easily finds a lover, who in his own rustic way, attracts her. Immodestly and quite frivolously she snatches his turban and runs about. Soon love-talks commence, jokes, confessions and promises follow. In commemoration of their love a herb is planted. Supernatural powers are bestowed on the plant. Bathing and singing run simultaneously. All this takes place in their first meeting.

Their second meeting gives rise to similar dream-like incidents. On this occasion Sudheer constantly tells her that he finds resemblances of his mother in her. Only Dr. Frued can unravel the trends of Oedipus Complex underlying his discovery. Equally strangely Durjaya experiences a terrible jealousy this time and his improper approaches consequently receive a fresh impetus in spite of his chains.

Now to the artistic presentation of the picture. Let us divide the film art into two sections for the sake of convenience. The

first section confines itself to the choice of the theme, the selection of expressive and significant incidents and the logically convincing arrangement of these incidents into a plot giving rise, at the same time, to the development of characters true to human nature. This is primary art. The secondary art is the sparing utilisation of the natural surroundings with a view to heighten the effect to be produced by the primary art. Unless the secondary art conveys the full meaning which the primary art intends to do, it will fail in its aim.

Let us quote three examples from the same picture. Saudamini, with a handful followers and a womanly heart, is struggling against half the humanity. The meaning of her vain attempts against odds is fully conveyed by the ceaseless beating of waves against the mountainous shores and retreating every time. Later on, when the director wants to show that even the humble attempts, if persistent, bring about the desired results, however slowly, he adopts the stage-method for conveying his meaning through dialogue. This is a serious blunder he commits. The expected effect on the

audience is lost. Had he concentrated the attention of the audience on the rubbed out rocks of the shores for a few seconds, without letting anybody utter a single word, the effect would have been magical even on the illiterate masses. Again, just think how this idea falls flat when we ultimately realize that the heroine succeeds in her attempts neither slowly nor suddenly. The partial harmony between the contents of the primary and the secondary art in this instance, is too pointed and disgusting.

When the disappointed Sudheer returns from Nandini into the jungle, he feels a storm of painful feelings in his heart. In order to convey the meaning of his inner storm, the external storm, that is a strong gale, shakes the entire forest. This is quite in keeping with the situation, but it is a stale method of conveying the strength of the inner storm, more advantageous by and more powerfully used by Griffith and his followers.

The lighting and extinguishing of candles to convey the idea how human beings pass away leaving their progeny behind, is certainly original and very effective. It voices the universal feeling which is as delicate as it is

sacred. Even such a well conceived artistic stroke falls flat upon us when we realize that the person who is leaving her progeny behind is a pirate who abandons her son who, ungratified of his mother's love as he is, has to stand opposed to her ideals. A precious stone is so misplaced that it cannot throw its full lustre.

"Amar-Jyoti" is in ill-conceived and ill-constructed picture inspite of its artistic strokes. It resembles a woman who, lacking in her natural beauty, strives to shine under a gaudy dress which she fails to arrange properly.

"Amrut-Manthan" covers up a wider range of human life, interest and ideals than what "Amar-Jyoti" does. The theme is clear and the opposing forces stand in their definite positions. Rajguru represents the old traditions while the Raja resists their tyrannising effect and plays the part of the reformer. Both believe in the righteousness of their cause. Personal interest does not inspire either of them. Nor does the sense of guilt trouble them either.

It is the beauty of the conflict that it touches the most intricate side of human

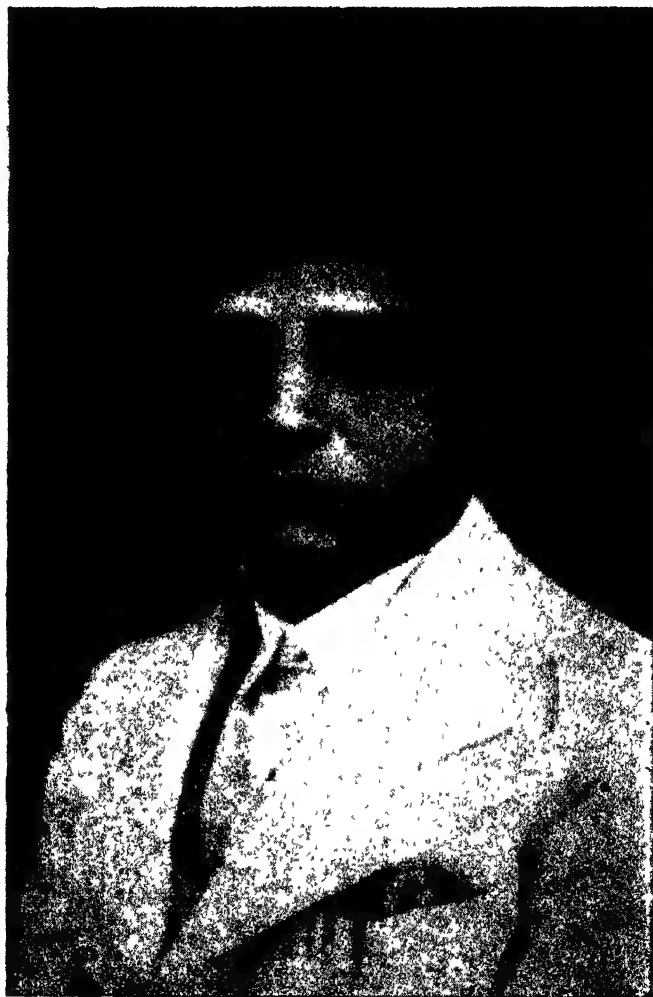


mind. Man lives in a world of deceptions. He deceives himself more than he deceives others. Nor can he live without self-deception. He has to believe in things which do not exist. He is terribly afraid of seeing things in their true colour. The entire religious and the moral structure of his life is governed by his self-deceiving tendency. His logic mostly varies with his personal interest. His habits considerably mould his attitude towards life. It is the fear of the society, not of God, that builds up his moral life, for, otherwise no gulf would exist in his private and the public life. It is mostly the fear again that binds him to the agencies possessing supernatural powers, which in his opinion, guard his vital interests against the unknown dangers.

The people that Rajguru represents are likewise habitually bound to a dietry which can destroy them, their children, honour, wealth, comfort and happiness if they disobeyed it. The very thought of disobedience makes them shudder because almost simultaneously the picture of a series of calamities to their vital interests passes before their mind. The power of habit as well as fear

keep the wheel running. When the Raja boldly rebels against the unperceptable magical influence of the diety, and attempts to effect a change, his people react in the name of 'rights' and 'no rights'. Usually reactions of this kind appear in a moral garb, so that neither of the opposing parties think themselves to be on the wrong side.

Good as the theme is, it is not free from defects. The diety which Rajguru defends, demands human sacrifice. The demand may not affect one and all in the state, but every one of them cannot escape the torments of ever-looming fear of death. Hatred is one of the reactions of fear. A people may sometime tolerate human sacrifice out of fear but they cannot be enthusiastic over them any time. Nor can they permanently abstain from reacting to such inhuman, ruthless, periodical deaths. It is the law of human nature that a drowning man catches the straw. When the Raja, the most important and the most powerful person boldly reacts to the inhuman act, not a single individual in the whole of the state takes advantage of the chance so offered. Every one of them sides the defender of human sacrifices. When his daughter, as Maharani, stands by



Mr. MOHANLAL



her father's ideals, and offers resistance, not one person speaks on her behalf. Even her maid-servants desert her. It is only when she weeps in despair as almost a helpless prisoner of Rajguru in her own palace, Vishva takes pity on her. She is naturally surprised at the change of this man and even suspects him of a double dealing. Vishva, however, assures her of his sympathy for her. It is the sentiment for her father's salt, not his ideals, that moves him to pity.

This is a serious defect in the nature of the theme itself, which otherwise, would have served as a powerful incentive to the intensification of emotion. For the same reason it miserably fails to give rise to an equally powerful opposing group in order to create a wider interest in the picture. The only opponent, the Raja, is summarily done away with in the beginning. As a matter of course his daughter succeeds him and offers resistance to the opposite group not so much of her belief in his ideals but of her filial sentiments. For long she stands alone, not as a strong resisting and a counteracting force, but as a weakling.

Her lover never helps her in her struggle. He is more of a passive political philosopher than of a man of action. What little activity he exhibits, it is confined to his suffering sister and the memory of his dead father. It is only Vishva who offers some resistance in the end inspired by motives other than those of the dead Raja. In short the theme fails to give rise to a sharply divided and equally balanced conflicting forces in order to heighten the interest of the audience.

There are other inconsistencies in the picture that are equally serious. The cunning, the intelligence, the resourcefulness and the callousness of a villain and the enthusiasm and sincerity of a religious orthodox are combined in Rajguru so that he neither excites our hatred nor our admiration. The methods which he adopts in exciting the religious sentiments of the subjects against the Raja in preparing a middle-aged man for the murder, and in dealing with the Maharani and Madhu carefully avoiding the dangers which often threaten to expose him, impress us that he is a villain of a high degree but when in the end, injured and pursued by his enemies, he sacrifices his own life before the diety with all his sincerity, our impression of his villainy is considerably undermined.

The love episode of Madhu and the Maharani is as ill-conceived and ill-constructed as the character of both of them. Immediately after the tragic death of their fathers, they are miraculously placed in a jungle to carry on their love pranks with the characteristic light-heartedness of honeymoon days. Madhu does not think of his helpless sister till late while the other gives up the idea of getting back her throne. She prefers the jungle life because she finds here both love and happiness. The canker of vengeance against Rajguru does not seem working in Madhu's mind. He talks of justice and political philosophy at the court of the Maharani while he can advantageously expose and denounce Rajguru on the account of the information conveyed to him through the parchment. On one occasion he calls Rajguru a dog and on another he just attempts to pounce upon him. Beyond this he does nothing to get himself avenged for the death of his father and the miseries of his sister. The madness of his sister, though a stale device, is powerful enough to excite the sympathy of the audience but it loses much of its force when we simultaneously watch her brother engaged in his love

affairs. His effort in this direction is nothing beyond his going out in her search. Her singing somewhere near the corpse of her father is certainly pathetic, but it is a clumsy device to enable her brother to take away the dead body. It appears as though the sepoys are in league with them so that they place the corpse near their hiding place, do not notice the person who sings them a song, make not the slightest effort to search the lost corpse, and take no trouble to decipher the address of their hiding place. Everything seems 'goody', 'Goody'.

There are no major characters in the picture except Rajgure. He is the hero without the heroine. Nor are there men or women of action except the same person. With its inconsistencies and the lack of consistently developed characters, the picture is as stupid as "Amar- Jyoti" in spite of the wider interests it excites.

"Dharmatma" presents a good story and an interesting theme. There is both consistency and completeness in some of its characters. There is no usual love-making affair and yet the story does not lack in interest. The theme is modern and forms the burning



topic of the day. The conflict between the higher and the lower classes or between the touchables and the untouchables is deep-rooted and is the direct manifestation of the instinct of assertion on either side. The garb that this instinct often adopts to conceal its ugliness is very subtle. It usually consists of things to which humanity attaches very high value such as religion, morals, ideals, character, spiritualism, superstition, etc. so that for long we remain self-deceived and neither party can detect the garb. Under the cloak of our best friend this instinct plays the deadliest enemy. It is the highest source of human happiness as well of human miseries. This is the tragedy of human life. Man has been for centuries struggling and striving to establish a lasting harmony between this instinct and his ideals. Prophets came and prophets went, warning against the ugly side of its manifestations. It emerged again and again with greater force and under new garbs. It will probably persist till the Doomsday for it knows the art of adopting itself to new conditions, and to new shapes. Very often it gets itself attached to economic aim which always remains subordinated to its main aim, viz. assertion.

The conflict between the two classes in the picture has not been deepened with an adequate number of expressive details and powerful incidents. The untouchables do not put up their own fight themselves but are led by one who belongs to the class of the opponents. The fight is not the outcome of self-thinking and self-realisation. What little recognition or equality the untouchables ultimately secure is not snatched as a right through a hard and trying struggle, but is conferred as a favour under the dictates of religion and through the personal efforts of Eknath. Eknath himself does not take the proper initiative in this direction. He is moved from one stage of action to another mainly under the pressure of Girja's intrigue. Precedence is given to the scavengers at Eknath's dinner just because Girja instigates the Brahmins to be purposely late. Next Girja excites the scavengers to test the sincerity of Eknath for their cause by inviting him to dine in their house. Champa, under some peculiar circumstances that move one to pity, invites him, and he accepts the invitation. He thus falls prey to Girja's intrigue and becomes the hero for the cause of the untouchables. The only merit he possesses

is that he is predisposed for such a work of reform.

It is on one occasion, that is, just before the dinner the untouchables seem to realize the gulf lying between themselves and the higher class and consequently they talk like rebels among themselves, but immediately, in the same scene, they behave quite contrary to what they have talked, trying to convey the impression thereby that they are so habitually subjected that they do not know what freedom is and that they are born to be slaves to the higher class.

Eknath, Girja, Champa, Hari Pandit, Shrikhandya and the fat Brahmin are perfectly natural characters with perfectly justifiable motives, except that on one or two occasions more pregnant words are put in the mouth of Champa than her age justifies. The fat Brahmin is a typical figure marvellously portrayed. Pingala simply echoes the views of her husband and has no individuality of her own.

Girja's method of intrigue, Champa's behaviour, especially while preparing meals for Eknath, the incident of her stealing flowers,

Hari Pandit's attitude towards her, the burning of the huts of the scavengers and the Brahmins under their characteristic surroundings are highly commendable factors in the picture.

"Vahan" or "Beyond the Horizon" presents an interesting theme, a well-constructed plot and consistent but ill-developed characters. There are conflicts within a conflict. Aggrandisement of the Aryans on the Anaryas finally leads to the development of sincere love between the individuals belonging to the two opposing races, the conquerors and the conquered. Kodand-varma, the patriarch of Aryans, who is reputed for justice, erects a huge shrine of the Goddess of Justice at an opportune time when his race is tyrannising the Anaryas. Like those who entertain good intentions all their life without doing a single good act, he keeps on harping upon the corruptions of his people for long, and talks of doing justice by putting an end to corruptions. He lacks in the vitality of a patriarch and in the tact of an administrator. He selects a wrong man, viz. Uttam, to round up those who spread corruption in the country. Uttam possesses the brains of a simpleton but has a serious task

to perform. He acts more like a prince than like a police officer.

Madhuvrata is the villain of the story. His villainy is of a simple type. He keeps a secret tavern, where some of the members of his race indulge in drink and licentiousness. There are no political intrigues, no bloodshed to capture power by overthrowing kingdoms. There is, of course, forced labour, which helps him economically. In order to secure slaves for his labour, he is said to have enslaved the tribe of Anaryas including their chief and their prince, who manufacture and carry wine for him from a secret place. The only weapon with which he terrorizes them is his whip. By appearance and position he does not seem to be either a prince or a commander of an army. God alone knows how he conquered the tribe and how he is able to keep its members under his subjection without the knowledge of the patriarch who to represent his own sense of justice, has constructed a huge shrine of the Goddess of Justice. The villain seems to possess miracles. His intelligence appears to be more useful to him than his power of miracles, for to discredit the enemy of his trade, Uttam, he sells a

young, beautiful slave girl to him, tricks him while conducting the loaded wine to the tavern, anticipates his surprise attack on the tavern, lies against him to the patriarch, and finally carries the Anarya prince out of the prison. Here his intelligence exhausts itself out. The world of his villainy fails to extend beyond this. Had he been half intelligent of what his appearance or make-up indicates, he would have considerably added to the beauty of the picture.

The love episodes in the story provide greater interest than his villainy. Jayanti, the daughter of the patriarch, an Aryan, loves the Anarya prince, Jeevan. So does Lata, the slave girl, love Uttam, an Aryan, whom Jayanti is already betrothed. Love knows no racial differences. Like the opposite poles, the members belonging to two different races opposed to each other, are attracted to one another. Their conflict dissolves in their love. The incidents which occasion the commencement of their love are as interesting as they are natural. Like the hero of the *La Misérable* Jeevan lifts the heavy weight of the shrine of the Goddess of Justice, and being consequently injured, falls uncon-

scious on the ground. The incident excites the sympathy and admiration of Jayanti. Her father who proudly worships the Goddess of Justice regards her sympathy as a sign of weakness and persuades her to desist from the act. Jayanti persists in her sympathy inspite of his protest. Her admiration and sympathy for him gradually, not abruptly, develop into a sincere love.

Lata's love for Uttam begins under a different situation. When as a slave girl she is being tortured by Madhuvrata, her master, Uttam makes a surprise visit to the tavern where this scene is taking place. Like a prince not like an officer entrusted with police duties he offers her master a purse to free her from his thralldom. When she is accordingly let free, she follows Uttam like a lamb inspite of his assurance that she is a free woman and can go wherever she likes. She forces herself into his house and acts as his maid-servant without giving him the least suspicion that she is struck with love. We thus see that in her case the incident occasioning the commencement of love is just the reverse of what has been in the case of Jayanti. In one case the woman pities the man and in the other man pities the woman. But pity is the

common factor in both the cases, that contributes to the growth of their love. Women are forward while men are reserved in professing their love in either case. Although their love episodes are simple in their character, they are nevertheless interesting.

The picture contains merits other than these love-episodes. The tavern life has been marvellously portrayed. The acting of the villain is quite in keeping with the part he plays in the story. Lata's close-up with her eyes rolling when the villain presses her foot with his is a master stroke of acting. The song sung in combination by Lata and Jeevan voicing the universal sufferings of humanity, is most pathetic and piercing. The make-up as in every other picture of Prabhat is perfect to the tip of the toe. In spite of the picture being essentially provincial, it never fails to excite interest.

"Dunya Na Maney" is much superior to most of the pictures produced by Prabhat, for unlike others, it contains an adequate number of expressive details and interesting situations. As in the case of the pictures of the New Theatres, more attention has been



paid to the development of action which generally lacks in Prabhat's production. It is not enough to depict human life as it is; discriminate selection of what really stirs the audience should form the basis of film-production. The Prabhat have been hitherto concentrating their attention on the background, the make-up and the music. They have been neglecting what are called the stirring aspects of human life. Life in action is more important than even the discriminate use of backgrounds.

“Dunya Na Maney”, therefore, marks a new departure in the traditions of Prabhat. One incident follows another with almost equal interest. Nirmala, a young and beautiful girl is married to an old man against her expectations. She is dependent on her uncle and her aunt who, on economic grounds, force this marriage on her. Although the bride-groom, who is a wealthy lawyer, is not aggressive and hot-tempered, Nirmala gains the sympathy of the audience from the beginning of the play. Her cause becomes the cause of every daughter of India just because she wisely puts up a tough fight against the aggressors. Unlike others, she

is a woman of action. She does not believe in the abject obedience to husbands. She is conscious of her own rights and knows how to assert them. She plainly tells her aged husband that he has committed a crime by marrying a young girl. She resists his approaches with all her might, invoking, at the same time, his conscience or his moral sense. She has also to resist the naked dominance of her mother-in-law so that her life impresses us as a series of struggle against tyranny and oppression.

Her struggle gives rise to three factors of intense interest in the story. The will to live in the old man comes in direct conflict with the ever reminded idea of his old age. He is directly told by his young wife that he is unfit for her because of his old age. When this reminder is looming heavy on his mind, his servant unwittingly impresses upon him the analogy between the old clock and his decaying life. The clock subsequently becomes a constant source of his mental conflict, which is further intensified when his friends talk to him about his marriage and when his daughter and his son write to him on the same topic. His mental

conflict ultimately gives rise to the pricks of his conscience especially when he realizes the strength of Nirmal's character which he happens to feel in her struggle against his mother and his son.

The second factor of interest is the conflict between her sentiment for the *sendur* and her hatred of the husband. On the one hand she does not recognize her marriage with the old lawyer and on the other she hesitates to apply the *sendur* which is the sign of a married woman. Her hesitation is noticed even by such a young girl as Shanthi. Its root-cause is revealed when she feels it irresistible to apply the *sendur* to her forehead during her *Gori-Puja*. Her sentiment is thus based on the religious grounds, which if further analysed, are revealed to be nothing but the fear of becoming a widow. This fear she herself expresses later on when her husband wipes out her *sendur* in his attempt to oblige her from her marriage tie.

The third factor of interest is her attitude towards her surroundings, viz., the Chachi, Shantha, Sosheil, a Jugal and the girls in the neighbourhood. The Chachi is the typical mother-in-law of the East, and she naturally

resents the independence of Nirmala. Nirmala, unlike other daughter-in-laws, is a woman of action and a staunch believer in the theory of 'tit for tat'. She has already no interest either in her husband or in his relatives. She is desperate and is not therefore afraid of the consequences of her attitude towards them. When the **Chachi** refuses to give her a plate she snatches one from her. When she likewise tries to starve her by locking the dining hall, she breaks the lock without any fear. Again, when it comes to physical fight she drives the **Chachi** out of the house. Their quarrels provide a chance to Nirmala to accuse her husband of the wrong done to her. Another chance to exhibit the strength of her character and the spirit of opposition is provided when Jugal makes improper approaches to her and when she cosequently whips him before the very eyes of his father. In spite of her open hostility she gains the admiration of her husband who thenceforward begins to give in and feel the pangs of conscience. Both Shantha and Sosheila have active sympathy for her. Her aggression, often tempered with proper restraint as it is, produces magical effect on her opponents.

The picture has got many merits. The home atmosphere of the lawyer is typically true to life. The character of the **Chachi** is marvellously portrayed. There is something artificial in the behaviour of Shanthi, Soshiela and Jugal and yet we find interest in them. Interest in Nirmala's uncle is heightened when he is driven out of her house. All the scenes wherein Nirmala and the **Chachi** come into direct contact with each other are invariably interesting. The concrete presentation of the old lawyer's conscience is an improvement over what has been presented in the "Manzil". Although there is something artificial in the two scenes in which Nirmala bursts out into a harangue in defence of her chastity, and whips Jugal for his indecent attitude towards her, both the scenes grip the attention of the audience.

On some occasions the background music is in harmony with the mood and the action of the play. Among the symbolic presentation of incidents, that of Nirmala's uncle and the ass is worth mentioning. The children's dramatic performance falls flat on the audience because the analogy between their and the main plots is based on false grounds.

No analogy is possible between two objects that are exactly alike. An analogy is established between the objects which belong to two different classes or species but which bear a resemblance in some of their essential characteristics. In the children's drama the heroine marries an old man as does the heroine of the main story. Both the incidents are exactly alike. Instead of intensifying the effect, the analogy undermines it. Take the case of Nirmala's uncle and the ass. The analogy in their case is true and hence effective.

Nirmala's gardening does not in any way help the development of the action of the story. In fact its effect is just the opposite. To beautify a house where she is discontented is unthikable. It would be natural if she is made to spoil its beauty, because she constantly bears a revengeful attitude towards its owner.

When Nirmala's uncle is sent to the lunatic asylum, the audience, of course, enjoy the incident. But when he behaves like a mad man among the lunatics, his behaviour is regarded as unnatural, because the audience

know full well that he is not really mad. Instead of exhibiting anxiety and fear he enjoys his surroundings like a lunatic.

Like the heroine of the "President" Nirmala appeals and talks to the pictures of her parents whenever she is in despair or in perplexity. Such a behaviour on her part appears to be unnatural especially because she is a woman who has received modern education. Instead of childishly talking to the lifeless pictures had she silently and pathotically looked at them, profounder meaning would have been conveyed to the audience through her silent looks.

The incidents and the situations in the story are, beyond doubt, interesting but none of them stirs you inspite of their psychological background. There is not much that is stirring in the theme itself. It does not adequately colour the development of the action. Moving situations there are none. There is a difference between a situation that is interesting and a situation that is capable of moving the hearts of the audience.

## CHAPTER V.

# Why do the audience like the tragic themes in films?

When it is the human nature to court pleasure and to avoid pain, how is it that tragedies which describe the unhappy side of human life, are capable of providing interest to the audience?

The fact is that more than half the human life is tragic in its character. To man life is a perplexity. In this world he is plodding his way mostly groping in the dark only occasionally guided by the glimmering light of his experience. Very often he tumbles and when he tumbles he is generally crushed without a just cause and without sympathy. His knowledge of men and things is limited and his reasoning is imperfect. And when he errs he falls. He is a slave to his biological needs and has to struggle like an animal to secure them. His bodily ailments often torment him. Over some of them he has no control. He is born just to die.



His mental world is more perplexing and more tragic than his physical world. Born with almost uncontrollable instinctive forces which mainly aim at safeguarding his personal interests, he is placed in the midst of a society which callously restricts most of his instinctive cravings under the threat of punishment and death. He has to live within the cultural walls built by the society. His life is tossed between the two conflicting forces, the individual and the social. His sexual, economic and political interests come into direct conflict at every step with those of the society. The power of both Law and the Rod governs him. The latter exercises greater control on him because it knows the art of aping the former. Hence the social difference, human misery and unhappiness. One individual or one group dominates the other. Hence the conflict. The same instinctive forces pulsate alike in all the individuals who form the society. Hence the clash of interests between one individual and the other. Quarrels, fights, wars, intrigues, blasphemy, theft, robbery, decoity, murder, tyranny, torture, bloodshed, punishment, jail, scaffold, jealousies enmity, deceit, hypocrisy, sacrilege, etc. are the direct

outcome of this clash of interests and are one of the main sources of human miseries. Man is perplexed under these uncontrollable forces and does not know how to adjust himself with them.

The greatest source of his life's tragedy lies in his character itself. Improper control of his childhood, bad training, lack of good education and of healthy environment give rise to a negative state of his mind. When brothers, sisters, parents, playmates, and relatives dominate over him, crush his emotional display unnecessarily, his personality is crippled and he turns into a neurotic. His mind becomes unbalanced. He develops inferiority complex, oversensitiveness, irritability, divided will, timidity, unbalanced courage, sadistic and masochistic tendencies, over-religiosity, superstition, and many other similar weaknesses.

Every weakness of his becomes the source of his unhappiness. On most occasions he has no control over what happens to him. He stands perplexed and wants to know the real causes of his miseries. It is his search for truth the sources of his life's tragedy that

tragedies facinate him. Tragedies mirror the most serious aspects of his life.

Did you ever notice when you hurt your finger how constantly you are poking it into everything? Or when you have a wound on your body how perpetually you hit it? How you focuss your attention on your ulcerated tooth and how constantly you touch and press it? It is just like this that man nervously drifts towards watching the miseries of human life which his nature wants avoid. Tragedies stir him and he craves to be periodically stirred up, for such a stirring provides him a deeper insight into the workings of human mind. Some of his emotions consequently purgate. He is relieved of emotional tensions. His mind is widened. His intellect develops. He takes life more seriously.

But all tragedies do not stir him alike. Some are dull, some disgusting and some partially facinating. It is the deepest tragedy that stirs him most. Unless it presents a most serious aspect of human life, and is governed by the law of causation it cannot attain its depth. Each and every incident in the life of the hero or the heroine cannot attract his attention. Discriminate selection

of incidents is the first essential of a good tragedy. Then comes their logical arrangement into a well-balanced structure. There is no place for chances in the march of events. The laws of the Universe are those of cause and effect. One event should give rise to another as antecedent and consequence. Even the inevitable must have its cause. It is then that a tragedy can be both illuminating and interesting. It can elevate and expand the mind of the spectator. Nature has morals, no sentiments. It cannot be partial to any individual or any group. It awards those who obey its laws and destroys those who transgress them. It is the fittest that survives. Human attitudes, human interactions, and social differences are governed by the same laws. The so-called man-made laws are also governed by the forces of Nature or the laws of the Universe. All the human virtues and vices are subjected to the same Laws. Even Destiny is explainable in the light of cause and effect. Nothing happens in the Universe without a cause. So nothing that is 'goody', 'goody' can deepen seriousness in a tragedy. Everything should be logical in order to be convincing and effective. The supernatural, the magic wand, the





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prayers, the timely help of a Sadhu or a Fakhir the unexpected kindness of a strong man or of a group of persons, cannot influence the march of events in a good tragedy, which teaches the audience that success in life is achieved only through combating the opposing forces, not through chances, destiny and kindnesses.

Life is a series of conflicts, the interest of one individual standing opposed to that of the other at every step. It needs both combating and adjustments. The serving of mutual interests on the one hand and offering of a tough fight on the other, are the two fundamental laws of human interaction. The real tragedy of life, therefore, springs from conflicts. The greatest conflict rises from within, the human mind or the character, which serves as the basic principle of modern tragedies. When the individual cannot adjust himself with his environment conflict is the result. Sometimes he has to create a conflict in order to adjust himself with his surrounding. Conflict is the basis of life itself. Stagnation sets in where there is no conflict.

There is an inexhaustible variety of conflicts among the human beings, the animal

and the plant world and even in the entire universe. Since no tragedy can be constructed without some conflict or the other, the play-write can conveniently draw hundreds of his themes from the conflicting situations in the life of the human beings. Variety of conflicts may be conceived between one individual and another, between an individual and the group, between one group and the other. All the basic differences between the cravings of the individual and the dictates of the society can form the best possible themes for tragic stories. This gives the play-write an inexhaustible store of themes. But as in the case of the selection of incidents, discrimination is also essential here. The fight between the two groups for the possession of a gold mine cannot be as interesting as the heroic defence of a people against their invaders. The sentiment of patriotism is more powerful in its appeal than the lust of gold. A duel between two human beings is more touching than a fight between two bulls. The conflict between the love of two sisters for the same person in the 'President' is more appealing and more novel than the conflict between the love of two friends for the same girl in the 'Manzil'.



Another group of themes based on conflict between abstract objects may be conceived by the play-write, such as conflict between virtue and vice, between one virtue and another, between two sentiments, and between two ideals. Here again discrimination is essential. Conflict between virtue and vice has been overworked in all ages, and can be advantageously avoided in many of its phases, because the line dividing them is clear and definite and is therefore less instructive. To establish the degree of value between one virtue and another by means of a pictorial action is highly instructive and provides considerable interest. Conflict between love and friendship, love and filial duty, patriotism and religion, justice and mercy, presents perplexing problem which needs a careful handling.

Conflict arising out of the flaws in character is more interesting and more illuminating than any other conflict. Irritability, oversensitiveness, divided will, unbalanced emotions, lack of harmony between emotions and intellect, sadistic and masochistic tendencies, various complexes, fixations, dominance of a single trait are some of the

flaws of human character or the conditions of a diseased mind which place the individual in direct conflict with his surrounding. A neurotic personality forms the greatest tragic character. All the great tragic characters both of fiction and history have been necessarily neurotic, for in the neurotic both the extremes meet, the good and the evil. Men of genius all over the world have been neurotic in some degree or the other without any exception.

No one can deny how the very progress of our civilisation is dependent upon our struggle and endeavourance. This is evident from the life of explorers and scientists who have been endeavouring the extreme heat of the African jungles and the extreme cold of the Himalayas and the arctic regions. There is not a single field of human activities where progress is possible without struggle and without endeavourance. This is the reason why the serious aspect of human life in a tragedy fascinates the audience. They want to know where obstacles in their way to progress lie. They also want to learn how to overcome them. Every serious aspect of human life must pass

before their eyes with the utmost tragic intensity. It is then they are stirred. Tragic intensity secured through death and blood-shed creates disgust among the audience. It cannot stir their fine feeling. It is here that the difference between a director and a director lies. A fine director not only possesses something of the inventor in him, but also penetrates into the minds of the audience. He selects their sentiments and twists his material in such a way that it should appeal to them as powerfully as it can. He never ignores the human tendency for variety or change. A theme or a method of picturing the action, however attractive, loses its charm if used for more than once. A fine director, therefore, is necessarily an inventor.

Love in tragedy is a necessary factor, which considerably contributes to tragic intensity. A good tragedy without a love theme is quite possible but its handling requires a master-hand. To create interest for the audience by means of an appeal to their sentiment of love is an easy job, which is both convenient and advantageous to the play-write. To eliminate such a powerful sentiment from among the

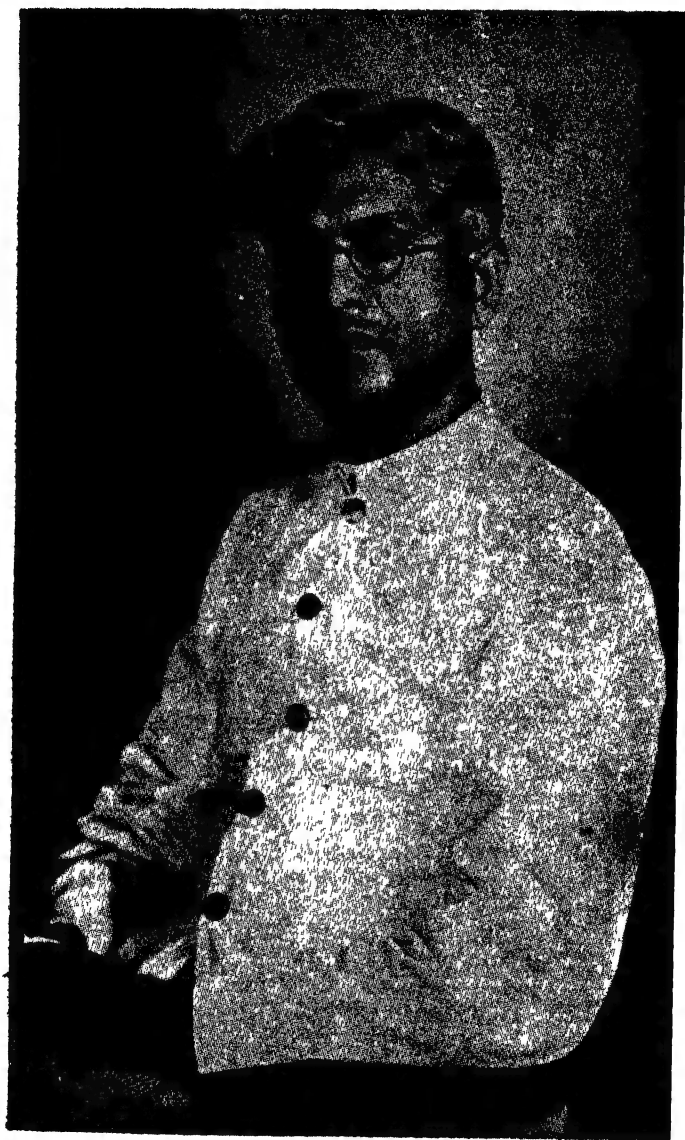
factors of appeal is not free from risk. There is always the fear of weakening the tragic intensity. The Prabhat film producers of Poona have presented tragic themes without the element of love in them with some success, but the weakening effect caused by the elimination of love factor is clearly perceptible in their pictures.

Love-life has various aspects which differ in their degree of depth and appeal. Love scenes which aim mainly at arousing coarser feelings of sex cannot interest the larger section of the public for they generally hurt the sentiment of modesty even of the rustic and the illiterate with the result that disgust creeps in as a disturbing element. When the same kind of amorous poses and scenes are frequently repeated without effecting a novelty in them, as generally happens in most of the Indian pictures, disgust is heightened and the very aim of the producers to please the audience is undermined. Staleness in anything, especially in the methods of film art plays the role of the deadly enemy. Direct appeal to sex does sometimes produce magnetic effect on a fraction of the rustic in the lower classes and when this small fraction

of the audience consequently bursts out into raptures, the producers generally miscalculate the extent of its effect. Direct appeal to sex is after all a substitute to what really stirs the finer feelings of love. Although love is essentially sexual in its contents, it is fortified by a system of walls of sentiments which are excited by methods that are cloaked and are mostly indirect. There is no place for direct appeal to sex in a tragedy for it undermines the smooth development of tragic intensity in the picture. Amorous scenes in a comedy are helpful in developing the laughing mood among the audience but not so in a tragedy. Tragedy presents love battling against odds and consequently developing a serious mood stage by stage until it rises to a pitch. Amorous scenes which are generally intended to serve the purpose of comic relief in tragedies, actually weaken the intensifying factors.

The ideal governing the love-relations of the hero and the heroine or the husband and the wife in most of the Indian pictures is disgustingly painful. Abject faithfulness on the part of the heroine is regarded as a

highly valuable virtue in the name of the Indian culture. She is depicted as a passive partner frequently subjected to physical tortures and jealousies of the lower order, with her vital interests placed entirely at the mercy of the lover. She miserably lacks the initiative and assertion. She is not an active partner helping him in his struggles and strifes. She has no personality of her own. Her un-called for physical sufferings, cries, sobs and tears are used as tragic factors. Like an injured lamb she presents herself as an object of pity. Her only merits are her chastity and faithfulness. She probably thinks that no other merit exists among the human beings. Her husband does not suspect her chastity and faithfulness when she lays unusual emphasis over them. Himself a scoundrel and a tyrant, he wants her to be meek as a lamb and faithful like a dog. Her only incentive to action is her jealousy and revenge. Ideals of higher order she has none. There is much of the child in her helplessness and intellectual immaturity. The average heroine in the Indian pictures is a despicable creature. The ideal of love is disgustingly stupid. Finer conceptions of love are almost absent. Finer sentiments are



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rarely touched. There is nothing inspiring about love. Nothing takes us aloft to a higher plane. Nothing provides us with a penetrating insight into the intricate workings of human mind. So far the conception of love is concerned in most of the Indian pictures, we gain nothing and we add nothing to our knowledge.

Our love-life is ambivalent. Love and hate are closely connected. Because of the ambivalent character of love, its potentiality as a deepening factor in a tragic story is very high. In the hand of a good director it serves as a powerful weapon, forming as the basis of conception of stirring situations. It is capable of providing material to the playwright for powerful conflicts. Conflict arising out of love and hate naturally involve jealousy, fear and courage, the sadistic and the masochistic tendencies, and these in turn serve as factors that deepen the tragic intensity. The assertive instinct, ambivalent as it is in its character, manifests itself in the form of the tendency for variety and change aiming at the conquest of one object after another on the one hand, and on the other striving to have an exclusive hold on the

beloved objects. As the same instinct is present in both the sexes conflict is its natural result. When the husband, in matters of sex, attempts to gratify his tendency for variety, the wife who wants to have an exclusive hold on him, naturally resists such an indulgence on his part. The husband behaves exactly in a similar situation. Now the problem arises as to who should enjoy greater freedom in an indulgence of this kind. The ideal would, of course, allow freedom to none: it would aim at the suppression of the tendency on the part of both. Nor would it preach reciprocity or make it conditional, for it would hurt the sentiments of chastity. If the husband gratifies his tendency, the wife, in revenge or as a right, cannot do so, because our culture has built the sentiment of chastity round the woman, not the man. Once the woman breaks her chastity she cannot regain her social position in spite of her repentance. She is thrown into the oblivion just because she has hurt the sentiment of man. The case is quite reverse with man. He is tolerated. He needs no repentance, no apologies. Only a sort of mild sense of guilt surrounds him. No sharp pangs of conscience trouble him.

Will the breaking of chastity on the part of the wife of a debauch, in revenge or as a right, form a good tragic theme? It would shock the audience if she is actually made to break her chastity. If she puts up a tough fight without breaking it, she can gain the sympathy of the audience. But such a twist in the theme would befit the comic rather than the tragic. Good tragedies generally aim at revaluing the old standards or virtues. Attempts at revaluation of this kind are fraught with danger. Only great men like Ibsen are fitted for such a task.

There are, of course, values other than this, in matters of sex, that can form interesting themes for a tragic story. Of the two equally beautiful girls, as for example, we prefer one who possesses social status. Besides the physical beauty, the family respectability, social status, wealth, power, culture, education, chastity, love, faithfulness, wisdom, etc., are valuable merits in a girl that not only serve as sources of attraction but also deepen our love for her. Each of these merits has its own value. Suppose, for instance, a girl possesses all the above mentioned merits except chastity, what will be our atti-

tude towards her? It will be cold. Other merits will have no value for us. Suppose, again, she is beautiful, chaste, sincere in her love for you, is cultured and educated but has no wealth and no recognisable position in society, she will not present to you as a hateful creature as the one who has no chastity. It is through such situations that the film can preach the ideal. It is the ideal when reduced to the actual stirs your deep-rooted sentiments. The ideal has a greater force of appeal than the actual.

## CHAPTER VI.

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# The Pleasant, the Comic and the Serio-comic.

The tragic fascinates us because it represents our actual troubles. The pleasant pleases us because it enables us to escape from those troubles. All of us seek pleasure and happiness, but happiness is achieved only when we succeed in our objects. The achievement of objects needs a long process of intelligent effort, combating and endeavourance. We generally shirk effort and combating, because they involve pain. The desire for the shortest cut to the objective is our dominant trait. If the serious problems of the life of the hero in a story are solved by the magic wand or by the timely help of a sadhu or a fakhir, we are relieved of the tension and feel exhilarated. The spectacle of the fairy world on the screen arouses pleasant feelings. The supernatural has its own allurements for us because it possesses the power of providing us with short cuts to our achievements in life. We feel happy when two sincere lovers

live without a hitch, when the just is awarded and the guilty is punished. Stately cars, palaces, gardens, beautiful women placed amidst comforts are a source of pleasant feelings. Lovers, love themes and love situations are universally liked.

The desire for the pleasant without combating obviously leads to degeneration. The film that promotes such a desire undoubtedly does a great disservice to its spectators. Most of the vital desires of the ignorant and the poor remain ungratified and the pleasant in the film, therefore, has a particular appeal to this class. But the thoughtful section of the audience does not get deeply interested in what is called 'goody', 'goody' in the film. When a life that has both shade and light is portrayed, its appeal is extensive and deep.

This naturally leads us on to the serio-comic. It has been customary to have the hero or the heroine of a tragedy killed in the end although nothing directly is mentioned to this effect in the Aristotelian Theory of Tragedy. A tragedy, according to Aristotle, should depict the serious side of human life, and that one event should give rise to another

as cause and effect until the last events or the end should not only form the consequence of the middle but in no case should it give rise to other events, so that the tragedy as a whole should convey the idea of completeness. The sense of completeness has been responsible for the deductions concerning the death of the hero and the heroine. Since the sight of death is both repulsive and painful the sense of completeness may be advantageously secured by having the hero or the heroine crushed economically, socially, spiritually or physically in the end. The hero or the heroine, whatever his or her traits, generally gains the sympathy of the audience, and to have them killed does not serve our purpose. When the hero is not a villain, as generally he is not, it is the persistent desire of the audience to have him rewarded in the end after his having passed through struggles and strifes. The death of the villain does, of course, satisfy the audience to some extent but not that of the hero when he especially possesses good traits. The death of the elder sister in the "President" and that of Dev Das and Parvati in "Dev Das" has been responsible for the painful disgust the audience experienced at the close of the

pictures. When we actually see in the world many a villain prosper, there is nothing immoral and unnatural in letting the tragic hero live and prosper. A serio-comic story with a happy ending is not only capable of creating intense tragic interest but it can also sufficiently instruct, elevate and please the audience. Neither a pure tragedy nor a pure comedy can serve both business and the aesthetic at the same time as does the serio-comic. A tragedy with a series of deaths and physical tortures, as is generally presented in India, has no place either in the film or on the stage. To depict the serious aspects of human life does not necessarily involve deaths and tortures. A danger when it stands threatening the vital interests or the life of the hero or the heroine as in "Anath Ashram" is more effective than its actual happening. The anxiety intermittently arising in the mind of the audience for the safeguard of the interest or the life of the hero and the heroine adequately serves the purpose of stirring them to the highest possible pitch provided noble sentiments and ideals are involved therein at the same time. Detective stories without a series of murders and physical tortures are capable of creating



an absorbing interest. Even crimes, without their ghastliness, can do likewise. Patriotism, love, honour, religion, sense of justice, reforms, injury, injustice, dishonour, the thirst for power, tyranny, the neurotic personality, etc., can form as material for the serio-comic or the pure tragedy.

When the unexpected happens to the human relations especially when these relations are closely connected with delicate sentiments, we are moved and grow serious. If the son deserts his father in time of need, if the wife of a loving and faithful husband suddenly proves unfaithful to him, if one attempts to poison one's brother, if an old friend plays the Judas, if an army disobeys its commander in time of war, if a leader betrays his own mother-land, if subjects become disloyal to the king when he has to defend his kingdom against the attack of the enemy, if great men, reformers and priests with unquestionable character are subjected to dishonour and physical tortures, our feeling is aroused to the highest pitch. Situations of this kind intensify the tragic atmosphere of a story. They can as well form the stirring themes for the tragic or the serio-comic plots.

To render a happy ending to an essentially tragic theme is always fraught with danger. Such an ending is likely to impress the audience as an unnatural growth. To avoid this sort of inconsistency, comic and pleasant situations, wit and humour should be spread throughout the plot in a chain of cause and effect without disturbing its tragic intensity at the same time. It is high art to interview the comic with the tragic. In the "President" these conflicting elements have been harmoniously so arranged that a happy ending is its natural development. Unfortunately it ends with a tragic incident, leaving an impression of incompleteness on the minds of the audience. If, instead of spreading the comic situations throughout a tragic plot, they are concentrated at the end in order to render a happy ending, the effect would be most galling. The New Theatres seem to feel unnecessarily nervous to finish the "President" with a happy ending. The end of "Anath Ashram" has been purposely left doubtful. The New Theatres unfortunately weep where they ought to laugh.

The comic in the film includes not only all the incentives to laughter but also all that is pleasant. Pleasant situations may not directly

excite laughter but they obviously contribute to the laughing mood of the audience. The incentives to laughter in the film may be roughly divided between two sections, viz., the comic situations expressed in pictorial action and the witty remarks expressed through dialogues. The comic element in the "President" essentially belongs to the latter section, which is the remnant of the stage and which should be sparingly used in the film. Pictorial action is more intelligible and more appealing to especially to the masses than the dialogue. The chief aim of the dialogue in the film is to economise the pictorial action. The superiority of the silent films over the talkies lies in the greater quantity of the pictorial action in the former. Dialogue also contributes to the action of the plot but its contribution is weak and less intelligible. The dialogue used in the pictures produced by the New Theatres is of course superior to that of the pictures produced all over India in that it is easily understood by nearly the cent percent of the audience, but when it is closely examined it reveals some of the stage methods which the New Theatres are fond of using for characterisation and the suppression of essential action.

Wit is one of those incentives to laughter that can not be expressed except through dialogue. Wit has a greater scope of expression in the comic and the serio-comic plots than in the tragedy. Whatever the nature of its contents, when it is heavy it involves thinking on the part of the audience before they laugh. Thinking absorbs the energy which ought to be used in laughter. Wit therefore should never be heavy with thought.

When and why people laugh is a problem which needs a serious and extensive study of human nature. To serve our present purpose a few salient points concerning the nature of the incentives to laughter will do. The Human weakness, the unusual and the incongruous in men and in their behaviour generally form the contents of the incentives to laughter.

Sex is a forbidden fruit and its attraction therefore is obvious. Any indirect and decent reference to sex produces laughter. The role of the indecent and the obscene in social life has been extensive in all ages. Modesty is closely connected with sex and acts as a corrective or the interfering agency in the excitement of laughter. It varies with

different classes of people. The cinema audience in India consists of people who differ in their intellectual level, outlook of life, culture, temperament and taste, and the producer therefore has to be careful in his selection of jokes. The jokes or the references to sexual life should be so twisted that they in no case should excite an opposing emotion in the minds of the audience for that will absorb the energy which can be advantageously used in their laughter. The producer must know how much and how far sex is labelled and how far is publicly tolerated. We cannot have as much free outlet on the obscene and the indecent in the public as we can in the smoke—room with friends of the same temperament.

Moral delinquencies such as drunkenness, gluttony, cowardice, hypocrisy, boasting, pedantry, miserliness, certain predominant traits, exposure of lying, ignorance, clumsiness, cuckoldry, etc., are also used as incentives to laughter. Polygamous tendencies provide a wide scope for wit and humour. Religious hypocrites, mother-in-laws, hunchback husbands, cowards, misers, the boaster and the greedy have always been the objects of ridicule.

Physical deformity, awkward movements, street mishaps, tilting, slapping, bumping of forehead, punching, beating, and kicking also occasion mirth and laughter. Unusual fatness, unusual tallness, dwarfness, the huge or a good round belly, the beacon nose, a persecuting squint in the eye, enormous feet such as of Charlie Chaplin represent the unusual, a deviation from the ideal of beauty.

Think of the clumsy fellow as a lover. Many comic situations may be conceived in his connection. The reaction of his clumsy behaviour on his beloved when she is surrounded by her guests, and on his mother-in-law when she is speaking of him to her friends and neighbours as a suitable husband for her daughter, is likely to excite an outburst of laughter. Think of the devil or the soul of your dead rival haunting you whenever you attempt to make love to your sweetheart. The way your fear of him drives out your love emotions will create comic situations. Think again of a coward who uses his brains in escaping the situations where he has to exhibit his courage and valour. Think of the miser who loses his sweetheart on account of his miserliness.

Think of a fair lad in the guise of a woman making love with a wealthy but miserly middle-aged man cleverly exploiting him or think of a young lady in the guise of a military officer trying to exploit various wealthy women of middle age, and by the force of circumstances being placed in awkward situations with young men.

When human vices or moral weaknesses are used as material for the comic situations, they are likely to arouse emotions such as disgust, pity, fear, and anger, which like modesty, resist the excitement of laughter. The devil and the haunting soul may cause fear in the mind of the audience if the fearfulness of their appearance and of their surroundings is not properly modified. Fearful appearance, fearful atmosphere and fearful situations greatly contribute to the tragic not to the comic mood of the audience. The public generally enters the cinema hall in the holiday mood and this is useful to the incentives to laughter. To first prepare a mood to laugh among the audience is the fundamental principle of the comic in the story. To do so in the midst of serious situations is, of course, a difficult task.

We may recall here something of what has been said in the preceding chapters in connection with the assertive instinct. Feeling of superiority is the manifestation of this instinct. Wit and humour are the outcome of the superiority feeling in men. The man who feels himself inferior in the circle of his friends or strangers is never good at his wits. Jealousy is the reaction of the frustration of the superiority feeling. We feel jealous because we do not possess the desired or the desirable object which our friend has. When our friend comes to possess the desirable object which we already possess, then also we feel jealous. To see our friend dispossessed of the desirable object gratifies our feelings of superiority although on such occasions we shed crocodile tears for his loss. The fact that when our son tumbles on the ground our anxiety is aroused and when our friend does so laughter is excited, establishes the validity of the statement. The comical in the person of our friends excites us to laughter more than what it does in that of the strangers. And we enjoy it still more in our enemies, because in this case vengeance and superiority feeling are simultaneously at work.







Mr. RAMNIKLAL



Mr. NITIN BOSE

Why do we enjoy or laugh at the physical deformity, mental inefficiency, moral delinquencies and incongruity in the behaviour of others? It is just because of the same feeling of superiority in us. Consciously or unconsciously we feel that the deformed man standing there before us is inferior to us and we are thus gratified. Gratification is the immediate step to laughter. The idea that we do not possess a huge belly, a squint eye, a hump-back, uneven legs and arms, a beak nose, a short stature, and that our behaviour is not queer, we do not tumble or fall, we do not get slaps and kicks as does the other fellow there, is the source of a feeling of security against the human defects and hence of satisfaction and laughter.

Sometimes, why, always one deformed person is a source of satisfaction to another deformed person. He feels or reasons out "I am not the only person in this world who is deformed; there are others like me. I should not therefore feel myself inferior in any way. I need not suffer on its account. I can live happily". So his satisfaction is an escape from the painful feeling of inferiority which is the reaction of the injured feeling of

superiority. Superiority feeling is again at work, of course, indirectly this time. Why do some people, time in and time out, try to talk, or laugh at, expose the family blots, moral defects, economic and social inferiority of others? It is just because that they either possess the same defects themselves in some degree or the other or because they aim at exhibiting their own superiority by exposing the inferiority of others. But the latter type of people are very rare. The former who are generally more vehement in their denunciation are extensively found. To drag them down to their own level is an enjoyment to them.

Be that the comedy or the tragedy, none of them will reach the ideal unless they elevate the audience. When the audience leave the cinema-hall they should find themselves in a reflective mood, their thoughts stimulated, their imagination heightened and their knowledge of men and things considerably added. Their reflection should lead them to the discovery of new values or to seeing the old values in a new light. They should have their mind expanded and in the light of their new experience they should

mould their attitude towards life and things. Unprofitable and timely purgation of emotions should, in no case, be the aim of any play. Ideals that give a fresh vigour to healthy activities and drive out the lethargic condition of the human mind should form the basis of every story.

Let us quote a few examples. Recall the story of "Omar Khayyam" exhibited some years ago. In this picture Khayyam has been depicted as a drunkard and a debauch, occasionally reciting his poems mostly improperly. Had he been depicted as a man discontented with the system of God and consequently voicing his discontent, battling against odds with moral courage and, finding no solution in the end, making the indulgence in woman and wine as his only shelter or solace, the picture would have been undoubtedly stimulating. The audience would have gained a new outlook of God's system or the human society.

Recall again the stories of "Dharmatma", "Anath Ashram". "Dunya Na Manay" and "Vidyapati".

The conflict between the touchables and the untouchables in "Dharmatma" involves

four distinct forces viz, the instinct of assertion, belief in the superiority of one class over the other, fear of the unknown and lastly the habit. Had the same story been described in the light of the workings of these forces with significant incidents and tense situations, it would have enlightened and stimulated the thoughts of the audience.

The hatred for the widow-marriage is the negative aspect of the sentiment of chastity in the garb of religion and family traditions. If, in "Anath Ashram" more light had been thrown on this aspect, the story would have been not only more interesting but also more instructive. The audience would have thus secured a chance to examine the soundness of their sentiment of chastity, or the reasonableness of their hatred for marrying widows.

The greatest reason why man is aggressive or dominant over woman is the economic dependence of woman over man. If today woman makes herself economically independent of him, all the religious and the sentimental walls surrounding the hoary traditions of his superiority over her will rapidly crash to pieces, and a new logic will emerge

to support her changed status. Had the story of "Dunya Na Manay" been given such a twist, it would have enabled the audience to think out the problem in quite a different way.

The sublimation of sexual love into spiritual love presents an interesting process. The drift of the thwarted love for a woman or of woman for a man into that of God is generally unconscious or half-conscious. Naturally it gives rise to a painful tug-of-war between the two kinds of love especially in its early stages. Such a conflict is highly interesting and can form the content of both tragedy and the comedy. Sublimation in its final stage can turn even the wicked into a saint. Wrong sublimation is likely to transform a disappointed lover into a recluse or a criminal. Had the director of "Vidyapati" depicted at least the conflict of the Maharani's love between Vidyapati and God, the picture would have been highly elevating.

Familiar personalities of history, religion and mythology provide considerable interest to the audience and if they happen to be endowed with ideals to which humanity attaches high value, they stimulate thought

and influence the outlook of life of the spectators. Let us examine the following incidents from history which are effective just because they represent some ideal or the other which we worship : —

1. When Sultan Salaudin's soldiers captured the town of Akka in Syria and when consequently looting was in progress, a Christian woman came crying frantically to Salaudin and complained that his soldiers had taken away his child. Salaudin immediately ordered the soldiers to bring and place before him all the children they had captured. When they were accordingly brought she recognized her child which was immediately restored to her. All the other children were like-wise restored to their respective parents. The soldiers were then ordered with a threat of death, to desist from such an inhuman act in future..

2. While marching to the front some of the soldiers of Malik Shah, the Saljukhian king of Iran, had happened to slaughter a cow of an old village woman without her permission. The cow was the only source of income with which she used to support her-



self and her daughter. She went to the Shah to complain against the tyranny of the soldiers. When the Shah was crossing a bridge she attracted his attention crying "O the son of Alpursalan! will you do justice to me on this bridge or on *Pulsirath*?" Alighting from his horse the Shah replied "I will do justice on this very bridge." After listening to her complaint he gave her one hundred cows and issued orders for the punishment of the soldiers concerned.

3. One day when Mansur Bin Abil Amir, the King of Spain of the Ameri dynasty was taking his lunch, it was reported to him that a Muslim girl was being tortured in a church situated in the kingdom of a Christian king called Ibne-Shanji. He immediately stopped taking his lunch and took an oath that he would not lunch in his palace any day of his life unless he rescued her. So saying he got up and marched with an army towards that kingdom. When the two kings met he plainly told Ibne-Shanji that he would devastate his entire kingdom if he did not hand over that girl to him. In order to appease the anger of the Spanish King Ibne-Shanji not only handed over the girl to him but he also

raised to ground the church itself where she had been confined and was being tortured.

4. Once Hazrath Ali had to fight a duel with an infidel. When the infidel was overpowered and fell on the ground, Hazrath Ali, according to the existing custom, wanted to cut his throat. At the time when he was about to cut his throat, the infidel spat on his face. Hazrath Ali immediately abandoned the cutting of his throat and left him free. The infidel felt naturally surprised and when he therefore asked why he did like that, Hazrath Ali replied "I began my fight against you purely for the sake of Islam and when you spat on my face personal motive of vengeance crept into my attitude. Had I killed you in that mood I would have been responsible for your death to God."

Incidents such as these, when dramatised, will obviously appeal more powerfully to the audience than what the supernatural elements can. The exploitation of our belief in the supernatural deviates the audience from the hard realities of life which need proper understanding and persistent combating. Such an exploitation, in our opinion, is a disservice to our society.

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